UTS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

Platform Journalism: Serious youtubers, democratic functions and the law

by Christopher James Hall

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

under the supervision of
Associate Professor Sacha Molitorisz and Professor Derek Wilding

University of Technology Sydney
Faculty of Law

1 July 2026

Certificate of Original Authorship

I, Christopher James Hall, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney. This thesis is wholly my own work, unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution. I did not make substantive use of any generative artificial intelligence tools in the research, analysis, or writing of this thesis, beyond those unavoidably embedded in common software. I take full responsibility for the intellectual contribution, originality, accuracy and integrity of the work. All ideas, interpretations, and written expression are my own. This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220.

Signature:

Production Note:
Signature removed prior to publication.

Date: 1 July 2026

Acknowledgements

This thesis, and all that went into it, was possible thanks to the support and guidance of my family, friends and colleagues. I would first like to acknowledge and thank my two amazing supervisors, Associate Professor Sacha Molitorisz and Professor Derek Wilding. Their efforts to encourage, support and advise me throughout my PhD journey were crucial to me being able to find success and enjoy the PhD experience. Their expertise was invaluable. Also, thank you Dr Penny O'Donnell for your support and valuable input in the early stages of my PhD.

I would like to thank Dr Timothy Koskie who has been an inspiration and a great friend throughout my PhD. Also, thank you to everyone at the Centre for Media Transition. My conversations at the centre were very helpful and allowed me to think through complex issues. I'd particularly like to acknowledge Professor Monica Attard and Dr Michael Davis for their many thought-provoking, and often challenging, conversations.

I would also like to acknowledge that my PhD research was supported by a Quentin Bryce Law Doctoral Scholarship without which I would not have been able to do my PhD.

Finally, I would like to express my enormous gratitude to my wife and daughter. You both have been the greatest source of support, motivation and inspiration.

Thank you all.

Previously published work

In line with university policy, parts of this thesis have been previously published in the following works.

Journal article

- Hall, C. J. (2025). Platform journalism on YouTube: A democratic functions approach to analysing journalism on digital platforms, *Australian Journalism Review*, *47*(1), 97-115. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajr_00178_7

Report article

- Hall, C. J. (2024), Youtuber business model: A profitable way forward for longform journalism. In S. Park, C. Fisher, J. Fulton & R. Picard (Eds.), *News industries: Funding innovations and futures* (pp. 28-29). News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. https://apo.org.au/node/328690

Conference paper (refereed)

- Hall, C. J. (2025, November 26-29), *Turning the tide at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation with platform journalism*, Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Communication Association (AANZCA), Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia.

Selected op-eds

- Hall, C. J. (2022, September 15). The rise of platform journalism. *CMT News*. www.uts.edu.au/news/2022/09/rise-platform-journalism
- Hall, C. J. (2022, September 7). Friendlyjordies leading the way for new public interest journalism. *Independent Australia*. https://independentaustralia.net/business/business-display/friendlyjordies-leading-the-way-for-public-interest-journalism,16743

Table of Contents

Certificate of Original Authorship 2
Acknowledgements 3
Previously published work 4
List of Figures 9
List of Tables 10
Notes on capitalisation and referencing 11
Capitalisation 11
Referencing 11
Abstract 12
Chapter 1 - Introduction 13
1.1 Introduction: Youtubers are having an impact 13
1.2 Research questions and methodology 17
1.2.1 Research questions 17
1.2.2 Methodology 18
1.3 Thesis outline and chapter findings 22
1.4 Contribution to the literature 24
Chapter 2 – What is journalism? 26
2.1 Introduction: What pornography and journalism have in common 26
2.2 Theory: The anarchy of journalism studies 28
2.2.1 Sociology and journalism 29
2.2.2 Political science and journalism 31
2.2.3 Other theoretical approaches to journalism 43
2.3 Definitions: A plethora of verbiage 44
2.4 Conclusion: Journalism definitions – a work in progress 49
Chapter 3 – Journalism in Australian law 52
3.1 Introduction: The many journalisms of the law 52
3.2 Previous surveys of journalism in Australian law 55
3.3 Method 58
3.4 Findings: Journalism understandings, definitions and themes 61
3.4.1 Four base types of journalism understandings 61
3.4.2 Journalism definitions in law 67
3.4.3 Key themes in legal understandings of journalism 68
3.4.4 Journalism's democratic functions in statutes 70
3.5 Analysis of key areas of law 70
3.5.1 Scope of this section 70

3.5.2 Laws to protect journalist sources 74
3.5.3 Broadcasting services 88
3.5.4 Criminal law 98
3.5.5 Privacy 107
3.5.6 Defamation: Public interest publications without journalism-related terms 110
3.5.7 News Media Bargaining Code 116
3.6 Journalism defined: Aligning journalism with the public interest 120
3.7 Conclusion 126
Chapter 4 – "Serious youtubers": Practices, ethics and businesses 128
4.1 Introduction: Finding serious youtubers 128
4.2 Literature review: Norms and practices of youtubers 129
4.3 Method and definitions 132
4.3.1 Youtuber 132
4.3.2 Serious youtuber 133
4.3.3 Participant selection 134
4.3.4 Interview process 140
4.3.5 Thematic analysis 141
4.4 Major findings 142
4.4.1 Finding 1: Serious youtubers are serious about authenticity and audience connection 143
4.4.2 Finding 2: Serious youtubers take ethics seriously 162
4.4.3 Finding 3: Serious youtubers run serious businesses 179
4.4.4 Finding 4: Serious youtubers have a serious identity problem 189
4.5 Conclusion 201
Chapter 5 – "Platform journalism": YouTube videos in the public interest 206
5.1 Introduction: Serious youtubers as producers of "platform journalism" 206
5.1.1 Previous research into journalism on social media 207
5.1.2 Assessing youtubers based on journalism's democratic functions 211
5.2 Method 212
5.2.1 Channel selection justification 213
5.2.2 Content analysis 215
5.2.3 Close reading 217
5.2.4 Semi-structured interviews 219
5.3 Content analysis results 219
5.4 Findings: Close reading video analysis 222
5.4.1 Friendlyjordies 222

5.4.2 Money & Macro 230
5.4.3 Ryan McBeth 236
5.5 Findings: Practitioners' views 241
5.5.1 The journalist label: Non-journalists producing journalism 241
5.5.2 Ethics 245
5.6 Conclusion 251
Chapter 6 – Platform journalism at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation 254
6.1 Introduction: The ABCs of platform journalism 254
6.2 Literature review 255
6.3 Method 258
6.3.1 Paul Barry – *Media Bites* 260
6.3.2 Matt Bevan – *If You're Listening* 261
6.3.3 Grace McKinnon and Amal Wehbe – vertical video team 262
6.4 Findings and discussion 263
6.4.1 Video-based digital platforms are the place to be 264
6.4.2 Experimenting in search of young audiences 266
6.4.3 Adopting platform norms and practices 270
6.4.4 Traditional journalism practices and support retained 279
6.4.5 Platform journalism success at the ABC 285
6.5 Conclusion 288
Chapter 7 – Youtubers in the eyes of the law 293
7.1 Introduction: Where youtubers meet the law 293
7.2 The Baddest MP: Dutton and Shield Laws 294
7.2.1 NSW: Person-based definition 295
7.2.2 Queensland and Commonwealth: Activity-based definitions 297
7.2.3 Kumova v Davison: A court interpretation of journalist 299
7.2.4 Conclusion on source protection and friendlyjordies 304
7.3 Money & Macro and defamation 306
7.3.1 Defamation law overview 307
7.3.2 Applying s 29A to Money & Macro 309
7.4 Punter's Politics and government support for "core news" 312
7.4.1 News Media Bargaining Code and News Bargaining Incentive 314
7.5 Conclusion: The chilling effect of the law's journalism confusion 318
Chapter 8 – Discussion and conclusions 322
8.1 Introduction 322
8.2 Serious youtubers produce public interest journalism 323

8.2.1 Serious youtubers constitute an emerging profession 323
8.2.2 Platform journalism is here now, and it's having an impact 327
8.2.3 Platform Journalism: A promising new business model for journalism 329
8.3 Bringing journalism's purpose to the forefront 332
8.3.1 Journalism in Australian law: Moving in the wrong direction 332
8.3.2 Journalism's purpose: Performing democratic functions 336
8.4 Benefits of a definition based on democratic functions 339
8.4.1 Benefits for audiences 339
8.4.2 Benefits for media creators 339
8.4.3 Benefits for lawmakers 340
8.4.4 Benefits for funders 341
8.4.5 Benefits for researchers 342
8.5 Conclusion 343
Reference List 345
Appendix A - Australian government inquiries/reports into media. 384
Appendix B – Academic definitions of journalism 387
Appendix C – Statute content analysis results 409
Appendix D - Statutory journalism definitions (key words in bold) 420
Appendix E – Journalism themes in finalised ACMA investigations 427
Appendix F – Journalism themes occurring in Australian broadcasting codes 429
Appendix G – List of interviewees for Chapter 4 431
Appendix H – Potential youtuber interviewees: Total pool 432
Appendix I – Indicative interview questions 434
Appendix J – Content analysis codebook 435
Appendix K – youtuber content analysis data for Chapters 5 and 7 437
Money & Macro 437
Ryan McBeth 445
Friendlyjordies 458
Punter's Politics 488

List of Figures

Figure 1: Instances of base journalism understandings, State & Federal Acts, n 76..... 67
Figure 2. Frequency of defined terms in State & Federal statutes. 68
Figure 3. Themes in understandings of journalism in State and Federal Acts. 69
Figure 4. Frequency of journalism themes in 11 ACMA registered codes of conduct. 94
Figure 5. Frequency of journalism themes in finalised ACMA investigations. 95
Figure 6: Taylor, beer in hand, discusses serious topics in a manner that showcases her personality (Taylor [münecat], 2024). 145
Figure 7: Thumbnail norms (Tabani [Zaid Tabani], 2026). 160
Figure 8: Sponsor segment for VPN company in video by Deveaux-Isaacs [Foreign Man in a Foreign Land] (2023). 180
Figure 9. Percentage of public interest vs non-public interest topics on the 3 channels. 220
Figure 10. Public interest topics on channel: friendlyjordies. 221
Figure 11. Public interest topics on channel: Money & Macro. 221
Figure 12. Public interest topics on channel: Ryan McBeth. 222
Figure 13. Example of right of reply offer [redactions by author] (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022b). 225
Figure 14. Primary source used in investigation (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022a). 227
Figure 15. Langker with interviewees. Blurring by friendlyjordies is evidence of ethical considerations (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2023b). 229
Figure 16. Use of primary source (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2023a). 232
Figure 17. Presenter Dr Schasfoort and his set (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2025a)..... 235
Figure 18. McBeth presents data from his original research (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2023). .. 238
Figure 19. Data about the X account "End Wokeness" collected and used as part of McBeth's original investigation (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2024b)..... 240
Figure 20. Examples of graphics and skits on Media Bites (ABC News (Australia), n.d.)..... 261
Figure 21. Lighting and background consistent with youtuber norms (ABC News In-depth, 2025). 262
Figure 22. McKinnon and Wehbe going "full platform" with non-standard microphone use (ABC Australia [@ABC], n.d.). 263
Figure 23. Self-description of friendlyjordies in the channel's Description section (friendlyjordies, n.d.-b)..... 301

List of Tables

Table 1: Acts with more than one journalism understanding. 63
Table 2: Acts analysed and not analysed in this section. 72
Table 3: Norms and practices of serious youtubers. 155
Table 4: Likelihood of Shanks-Markovina qualifying for journalist privilege protection for Baddest MP:Dutton. 305

Notes on capitalisation and referencing

Capitalisation

YouTube

This is the name of a company and trademark, thus the capitalisation that the company uses is adopted.

youtuber

This is a common noun used for a type of work. As such no capitalisation is used unless it is at the beginning of a sentence. This capitalisation decision is consistent with other occupational labels used in this thesis such as lawyer and journalist.

YouTube channel names

For YouTube channels, this thesis adopts the capitalisation given by the channels. For example, the YouTube channel friendlyjordies is all lowercase.

Referencing

The referencing style used in this thesis is APA7. Adaptations to this referencing style have been made where necessary. This is an interdisciplinary thesis that includes traditional academic sources, legal material, and non-traditional sources such as comments under YouTube videos. When needed, the Australian Guide to Legal Citation 4 was consulted and author discretion was applied.

Abstract

We live in an age of misinformation, low trust in news organisations and what is often described as a journalism crisis. However, a large and growing number of people seek out news and information on YouTube, often from independent youtubers. This thesis investigates whether youtubers, and specifically "serious youtubers", produce public interest journalism. A challenge for such an investigation is that journalism is a hotly contested concept, both in theory and in practice, with deep disagreements about its role and definition in disciplines that include media production, law, politics, culture, technology, and business. In response, this thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach and a multimethod research design that includes qualitative semi-structured interviews, doctrinal legal analysis, and content analysis. After synthesising a definition from scholarship and law, it finds that serious youtubers produce public interest journalism. Moreover, they produce a new form of journalism: "platform journalism". However, professional recognition of these journalism-producing youtubers is lacking. Similarly, legal protections for such creators are inconsistent and unclear. This thesis concludes that platform journalism can and does contribute to a vibrant media ecosystem and merits protection in law.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Youtubers are having an impact

On the 6th of June 2022, Justice Rares of the Federal Court of Australia handed down his judgment in the defamation case *Barilaro v Google LLC* FCA 650 (*Barilaro v Google*). At issue were two videos published by the YouTube channel friendlyjordies in late 2020, *bruz* and *Secret Dictatorship*. The videos featured Jordan Shanks-Markovina reporting and commenting on the then New South Wales Deputy Premier John Barilaro. At the time of the trial, friendlyjordies had more than 626,000 subscribers – easily outstripping most Australian newspapers – and an average video view count in the hundreds of thousands, which is comparable with nightly audiences for TV news (Jaspan, 2025). With this large and growing audience, the channel was having an impact on NSW politics, as Barilaro made explicit when he singled out friendlyjordies as "a big reason" for his 2021 resignation from politics (ABC News (Australia), 2021, 5:12).

The videos at issue in *Barilaro v Google* were found to contain defamatory matter.[1] In his judgment, Rares J commented on the lack of journalistic standards in the videos, which included unverified or inaccurate claims, an absence of a right of reply, and an absence of a public interest in the continued publication of the *bruz* video. His Honour was most scathing when he wrote that YouTube was being used by Shanks-Markovina to "disseminate his poison" (*Barilaro v Google LLC* [2022] FCA 650, p. 115). Though it was not made explicit, the strong implication was that Shanks-Markovina was not a journalist, and that his work was not journalism.

[1] Barilaro sued both Shanks-Markovina and Google, which owns YouTube. Shanks-Markovina settled with Barilaro but Google went to trial and offered no defence. Google was found to be co-publisher of the material and was ordered to pay damages of $715,000.

Many people vehemently disagree. Far from being poison, friendlyjordies is regarded by many as a source of trustworthy journalism. Beneath many friendlyjordies videos, top comments regularly praise the content as good journalism:

- "It sounds like the first time in years that we are watching a real investigation journalist doing an amazing job, collecting the truth, on a real huge issue, letting the people talk instead of politicians, lobbyists and news anchors" (@Tahia213, 2021).
- "As a former political journalist who was born near Wagga Wagga, please don't ever give up on this critical, crucial work. You and your team are phenomenal for carrying out this investigative journalism" (@jellybean_91, 2020).
- "This is REAL journalism, going to places of danger, telling stories of those who can not tell it themselves. Keep up the fantastic work Jordies team!" (@thetargetlive, 2023).

NSW politicians have also referred to team members of friendlyjordies as journalists; and, more significantly, publications by friendlyjordies have led to official lines of inquiry by Members of Parliament (NSW Parliament, 2021b, 2021a).

In 2022, with a video titled *fixated*, friendlyjordies published an original investigation into alleged misconduct by members of the NSW police force (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022c). Matters raised in the video were discussed in Budget Estimate sessions and included official questioning of a police commissioner by members of the NSW Legislative Council (NSW Parliament, 2022). Even former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has called for Shanks-Markovina to be treated "as a serious journalist" (Koziol, 2020).

Meanwhile, traditional reporting on friendlyjordies has been inconsistent. In news reports, Shanks-Markovina has been referred to as a "controversial youtuber" (Sibthorpe, 2023). He has also been referred to more positively as a "YouTube star" (Cam & McCarthy, 2023). Other labels have included "comedian" (Rawsthorne, 2022), "satirist" (McClymont, 2024a) and "political commentator" (Cormack & Hunter, 2020). Only rarely has Shanks-Markovina been referred to in news reports as a journalist, such as when Tanner (2021) wrote of him as a "YouTube journalist". Rarer still have other team members, such as writer/producer Kristo Langker, been referred to in terms of journalism work. One rare instance was when Kate McClymont (2024b), chief investigative reporter of with *The Sydney Morning Herald*, referred to Langker as a journalist. In addition to this, the reporting about friendlyjordies by traditional journalists almost never touches on the substance of the video content. Rather the focus is the style of the content, legal trouble, or the relationships between Shanks-Markovina and politicians such as John Barilaro, Jodi McKay, and Kevin Rudd.

As the above snapshot shows, the YouTube channel friendlyjordies is polarising. Its supporters say it publishes exemplary journalism; but its detractors say it publishes not journalism but poison or, at best, comedy. So, which is it? Journalism? Or something other than journalism? This issue goes far beyond friendlyjordies. Indeed, friendlyjordies is merely a high-profile Australian example of a global trend of independent "serious youtubers" (a phrase I have coined) who are seemingly becoming more journalistic.

This emerging global trend of serious youtubers includes Belgium-based Dr. Joeri Schasfoort, from the channel Money & Macro, who has been invited to press conferences for the European Central Bank (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2024a), and US-based Ryan McBeth, a youtuber who has built a large following creating videos on newsworthy topics, interviewing high profile

individuals, attending press events, and speaking at professional conferences. Further youtubers of this kind include Coffeezilla, Tom Nicholas, and münecat. Moreover, there is an emerging trend of established media personalities leaving traditional media to build their own channels. In June 2026, one such "star" of Australian traditional media, and one of Australia's highest-paid TV presenters, Karl Stefanovic, left Nine in controversial circumstances following a podcast with a right-wing activist to concentrate on growing his own YouTube channel and podcast (Gbogbo, 2026).

These figures publish videos in a global context where YouTube is increasingly a leading source of news. YouTube has long been the most popular video-based platform in the world for news, and second only to Facebook as the most popular social media platforms for news overall (Egan et al., 2026, p. 21). In Australia, studies suggest that 63% of people use YouTube, and of these 51% use it for news (Park et al., 2026b, p. 117). Importantly, less than half of those who use YouTube for news go there for mainstream news brands or journalists (Park et al., 2025b, p. 96). For their news on YouTube, many Australians say they "generally pay most attention to" sources such as "alternative news sources", "political activists", "online personalities", and "ordinary people" (Park et al., 2025b, p. 96). YouTube is also very popular with Australian teenagers. Almost three-quarters of teens use the platform according to one federal government study (eSafety Commissioner, 2021, p. 4), with YouTube the platform of choice for teenagers seeking out informative content (Moody et al., 2021, p. 17).

The popularity of YouTube as a source of news stands in contrast with traditional news media. Trust in news media is low. News avoidance is high. According to the *Digital News Report: Australia 2026*, published in June, only 43% of Australians trust news media, and almost 70% of Australians avoid news media to some extent (Park et al., 2026b, p. 13). The low regard for

traditional journalism is not helped by news media scandals, such as Channel 9 editing the photo of a female politician to enlarge her breasts and make her outfit "more revealing" (Dunstan & Ortola, 2024), or Channel 7 naming the wrong person as the Bondi Junction stabbing attacker in April 2024 (Nichols, 2024), or Channel 7 paying exorbitantly large amounts for an exclusive interview with alleged rapist Bruce Lehrmann (Bradley, 2024). In an environment where mainstream news media is no longer trusted by most people, and where "individuals encounter a plethora of narratives online" (Park et al., 2025a, p. 4144), more and more people are turning to independent youtubers for news. However, there is little research into whether such youtuber content qualifies as journalism, and whether those youtubers qualify as journalists, with all the legal protections that such a label conveys.

1.2 Research questions and methodology

1.2.1 Research questions

The central aim of this thesis is to determine whether youtubers produce journalism, and more specifically whether they produce public interest journalism. This is a challenging undertaking, in part due to the unsettled understandings of journalism among practitioners, in academic literature and in the law. The inclusion of law in this research is significant and timely. Defamation law is only one area that has an impact on journalism. Recent attempts to regulate digital platforms in relation to news remuneration has required explicit consideration of which forms of news and journalism are recognised and brought within these legal and financial frameworks. The thesis is driven by a core research question:

RQ: Do independent youtubers produce journalism and public interest journalism?

Underlying this core research question are the following sub-questions:

SQ1: What is "journalism" and what is "public interest journalism"?

SQ2: Can youtuber-created journalism and public interest journalism be found on YouTube and, if so, what do they look like?

SQ3: What does this finding mean for the practice of journalism and its place within policy and the law?

1.2.2 Methodology

This thesis adopts a methodology that is interdisciplinary and multimethod. An interdisciplinary approach was chosen as it is particularly useful for "problems or questions that are too complex to be answered satisfactorily by any one discipline" (Szostak, 2015, p. 129). To investigate this topic, I have drawn from the disciplines of law, media studies, journalism studies and political science. Alone, each of these disciplines cannot comprehensively address the research questions. Indeed, the academic literature on journalism and YouTube spans many disciplines.

The multimethod approach involves combining different methods in a single study, allowing greater understanding than if each method were implemented alone. Multimethod approaches are especially suited to dealing with the complexities that arise from interdisciplinary research and where different methods are needed to comprehensively answer the research questions (Szostak, 2015, p. 129; Tashakkori et al., 2021, p. 49). The methodological approach taken in this thesis is appropriate for this research as both journalism and youtubers are multifaceted. They include different elements that require investigation (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 38; McGrady et al., 2023). These elements include production processes, motivations, ethics, media content, audience perceptions, business models, and media law. Multimethod approaches have been used

in research into media organisations for several decades and they continue to be particularly relevant for studies that involve online platforms (Nieborg et al., 2020).

In a media environment where the internet is ubiquitous and digital platforms dominate, journalism studies scholars have gone so far as to argue that relying on individual methods is no longer a viable option and that a multimethod approach is necessary where journalism scholars employ a "methods toolkit" (Loosen & Schmidt, 2016, p. 563). This journalism studies toolkit proposed by scholars includes interviewing and content analysis, which are both methods employed in this thesis. However, there is one significant addition. In addition to interviews and content analysis, this thesis includes comprehensive legal research. The inclusion of legal research is noteworthy as journalism has a special place in law, yet it is rarely included in research by journalism scholars when investigating online content creators.

The multimethod approach applies different methods at different stages of the research. In Chapter 3, doctrinal legal research and content analysis are used to determine how Australian law understands journalism. In Chapter 4, thematic analysis is applied to transcripts of semi-structured interviews of youtubers to identify potential norms and common practices. In Chapter 5, three methods were integrated to assess whether serious youtubers produced public interest journalism: content analysis; qualitative close reading textual analysis; and qualitative semi-structured interviews. Finally, in Chapter 6, qualitative semi-structured interviews of journalists from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) were conducted to gain an understanding of how traditional journalists are influenced by serious youtubers.

The multimethod approach adopted in this research created some practical limitations and hurdles, the most significant of which involved human research methods. While legal documents and online videos do not change once collected, human research is more dynamic as it involves real people with busy lives. Over the course of my research, I have had to adjust and adapt as some opportunities appeared and others evaporated. Recruiting youtuber interviewee participants was a drawn-out and difficult endeavour. Once the initial sample pool was identified, as described in detail in Chapter 4, youtubers were contacted via their publicly available emails. Most people did not respond; some declined. Eventually 20 youtubers were interviewed over a period of more than 12 months.

Most participants took several weeks to several months to reply and lock in an interview time. In some cases, a participant took many weeks to reply only to say that the following day was their only available time to be interviewed. The delayed responses by interviewees required flexibility so that interview opportunities were not missed. It also meant that the total number and make-up of the interviewee sample was difficult to predict. In the end, however, the sample size was in line with my target range of 15-25 participants, and significant participant diversity was achieved.

One initial challenge for this thesis was the inability to interview Jordan Shanks-Markovina, the presenter of the friendlyjordies YouTube channel. The original plan of this thesis included participant observation as a key method, where the work of the friendlyjordies team would be observed in the pre-production, production, and post-production phases of the YouTube video creation process. When I interviewed the friendlyjordies YouTube channel's writer and producer, Kristo Langker, he said that Shanks-Markovina was willing to be interviewed for this project. However, that interview did not eventuate. This is likely due to death threats made against the friendlyjordies team and their families, due to their reporting, which were made public in a

friendlyjordies statement posted in the months following my interview with Langker (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2024). As a result, the participant observation component was abandoned.

Once participant observation was abandoned, the plan for human research pivoted to involve interviews with youtubers exclusively. However, interviews with journalists from major news organisations were added to this plan after it was revealed in youtuber interviews that there was behind-the-scenes collaboration between some youtubers and journalists. This led me to question how traditional journalists were being influenced by youtubers, and to understand how they viewed journalistic content of youtubers. To find answers, I sought to include some traditional journalists among the interviewees.

As with youtubers, however, most journalists I contacted did not respond or declined to be interviewed. Journalists were contacted at organisations including *Guardian Australia*, *Sky News Australia*, the ABC, *Crikey*, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. At first, it was hoped that this line of inquiry would give an account of the opinions and experiences of journalists from a wide cross-section of traditional Australian news media. Ultimately, however, this component of the research was limited to interviews with four journalists form three teams at the ABC.

This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Technology Sydney. All interviewees gave their informed consent to take part in this project and be named. UTS HREC REF NO. ETH22-7480.

1.3 Thesis outline and chapter findings

The thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 investigate how journalism is defined in both the academic literature and Australian law. More specifically, Chapter 2 analyses theoretical perspectives of journalism studies to show that there are profound disagreements about what journalism is. Chapter 3 conducts an audit of journalism definitions and understandings in Australian law. It demonstrates the inconsistencies and contradictions in how the law understands journalism, with conflicting definitions across areas of law and jurisdictions. I synthesise and adopt elements of various journalism formulations from both theory and law to propose two definitions of my own: a definition of "journalism"; and a definition of "public interest journalism". The key definition for my purposes is the latter, which has as its focus the core normative democratic functions of journalism. It is against those definitions that I then ask the central question: do independent youtubers produce journalism, and if so, do they produce public interest journalism?

Chapter 4 contains interviews with 20 independent youtubers. Choosing which youtubers to interview was no straightforward task. YouTube is a platform with millions of channels. In Chapter 4, I identify the sub-category of youtuber, "serious youtuber", and introduce the hypothesis that, if independent journalism is to be found anywhere on YouTube, it is likely to be found in this category. Following an extensive selection process in which I contacted 79 youtubers, I interviewed 20 English-speaking youtubers from around the world. The channels included in this chapter were, at the time of interviewing, well established and sizable with subscriber counts ranging from 70,000 to 4.5 million. The interviews revealed that "serious youtuber" is more than a simple device for sample selection. Serious youtuber is a distinct, previously unnamed, occupation.

In Chapter 5, three serious youtuber interviewees were selected from the larger sample of 20 for more in-depth analysis. The aim was to apply the public interest journalism definition developed in Chapters 2 and 3. By combining qualitative close reading analysis of videos with data from semi-structured interviews, this chapter finds that serious youtubers do in fact produce public interest journalism. Moreover, the type of journalism they produce is novel, and to describe it I coin the phrase "platform journalism". This type of journalism is distinct and sits alongside other categories such as broadcast and print journalism.

In Chapter 6, I interviewed four journalists from three teams at the ABC about their opinions and experiences concerning their efforts to produce platform journalism. These interviews show that platform journalism on YouTube is not limited to serious youtubers. Not only are teams at the ABC consciously adopting norms and practices of content creators, such as youtubers, but they punch above their weight at the ABC in terms of audience size.

In Chapter 7, I discuss how youtubers fit within different areas of journalism-related law. While Chapter 5 demonstrates that serious youtubers produce public interest journalism, Chapter 7 shows that this does not necessarily mean that they meet journalism-related legal definitions and are entitled to legal journalist protections and privileges. The law, it turns out, is confused and confusing. In some cases, serious youtubers easily qualify for inclusion in legal definitions, and in others they are unlikely to.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents key conclusions from the research and proposes recommendations, including that journalism-related statutes should be amended to ensure there is a consistent definition of journalism across Australian jurisdictions – a definition that has a focus on

journalism's democratic functions. This would more effectively serve the public interest, and Australian democracy.

1.4 Contribution to the literature

This thesis contributes to journalism studies and media law research. It draws out journalism's civic purpose, as well as its status in law, to conceptualise journalism based on the core democratic functions that it performs for society. This contrasts with most recent journalism studies, which approach journalism from sociological theoretical perspectives, which have as their focus a professionalised journalism field or occupation.

Clearly and unequivocally, my research leads to the conclusion that youtubers produce public interest journalism. As such they should be able to receive journalistic protections in law as well as access to funding designed to foster public interest journalism. However, the findings from my legal analysis show just how complicated it is to assess whether youtubers do in fact qualify for these legal protections and/or funding. Results show that there are 27 different, often contradictory, statutory definitions of journalism-related terms, and even more inchoate understandings of journalism for which there are no explicit statutory definitions. In the current fragmented media ecosystem, public interest journalism is being produced, often unrecognised, outside the traditional professional journalism field. In this context, the numerous conflicting journalism definitions, in law and academic literature, and frequent "I know it when I see it" approaches, impede the goal of fostering public interest journalism. In fact, this situation ignores organic public interest journalism and favours established media organisations irrespective of how much public interest journalism they produce.

This thesis demonstrates that such organic public interest journalism exists on YouTube. As public interest journalism is important to a healthy democracy, the current definitional mess means that journalism is unlikely to fulfil its potential to contribute to democratic society. The major contribution that this thesis makes is to bring together understandings of journalism from theory and law to propose a definition of journalism based on its core democratic functions. In a time when audiences are increasingly going to online platforms for their news, such a definition can provide clarity and focus for audiences, media producers, and lawmakers and it will encourage the promotion and protection of public interest journalism.

Chapter 2 – What is journalism?

2.1 Introduction: What pornography and journalism have in common

"I know it when I see it" was famously claimed in a 1964 judgment by US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart in reference to "obscene pornography" and he went on to say that the phrase "may be indefinable" (Gewirtz, 1996, p. 1027; *Jacobellis v. Ohio* 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964) (Stewart, J., concurring)). Journalism has often been treated similarly. Journalists say they know journalism when they see it (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017, p. 1470). It has even been said that the bedrock on which the journalism field is built is "I know it when I see it" (Donsbach, 2010, p. 38). This tendency to speak of journalism without it being defined is reflected in broader society, often marked on social media in the negative with the ad hoc hashtag "#thisisnotjournalism" (Simons, 2022, p. 66). In journalism studies literature, journalism-related phrases are often unexplained and undefined, presumably because of an assumption that both the author and reader know it when they see it. Or perhaps journalism is seen as just too difficult to define. Some leading academics have even said that defining journalism "may well be impossible" (Greste, 2023, p. 27).

For those scholars who do venture a definition, their formulations vary wildly. One complication is that there are many journalism-related phrases used in the literature, including news, journalist, journalism, investigative journalism, the news media, media, and news reports. Other relevant terms include public interest journalism, the press, and the fourth estate. These terms are often used interchangeably in the academic literature just as in everyday parlance. At other times, scholars give specific meanings, although these are sometimes contradictory. And while some scholars use news, media, and journalism interchangeably, others construe news as conceptually

distinct from journalism, arguing that it is "no longer tied to journalism" (Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 6).

Journalism, I will argue, can be defined. Moreover, it should be defined. And for our purposes, definitions are vital. This thesis aims to evaluate independent youtubers and their content in order to determine whether they produce journalism, and specifically public interest journalism. To do this we need to have a clear idea of what we are talking about. This chapter delves into journalism studies to lay the groundwork for arriving at clearly articulated definitions of journalism and public interest journalism by which we can assess youtubers and their content. These definitions will be introduced in Chapter 3. Additionally, I will argue that articulating a clear definition of public interest journalism is important for more than just assessing youtubers. This is because journalism-related legislation, regulation, and grants often focus on supporting or protecting public interest journalism. It is important to clarify with greater precision exactly what it is that deserves to be supported and protected.

In the following sections, I delve into the literature on definitions of journalism and related terms. I unpack them and assess them based on the overarching goal of this thesis which is to assess independent youtubers and their work. Ultimately, I adopt a political science perspective of journalism: one that focuses on journalism's purpose of performing core democratic functions.

2.2 Theory: The anarchy of journalism studies

Journalism studies has been described as "theoretical anarchy" (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 50) and a "conceptual mess" (Witschge et al., 2019, p. 657). It has no dominant theories, understandings, or set of accepted definitions. This is "despite an enormous body of literature dealing with the values, practices, and impact of journalism" (Zelizer, 2009, p. 34). It is also despite beliefs from journalism scholars themselves that disciplinary consensus and conceptual clarity are "normally relied upon by scholars in order to build on and contribute to collective knowledge" (Bartleman et al., 2026, p. 20). In 2009, Zelizer concluded that journalism scholars "have not produced a coherent picture of what journalism is" (2009, p. 34). Similarly, a largescale longitudinal analysis of research published between 2000 and 2013 in two of the leading journalism-focused journals found "more than 100 different theories guiding the research" (Steensen & Ahva, 2015, p. 13). Digital has only increased the anarchy. With the spread of the internet and digital platforms, digital journalism emerged as a distinct area of study. A study of 140 abstracts from the journal *Digital Journalism* by Steensen et al. (2019, p. 330) found that the "theoretical richness" of journalism studies continues into the digital realm as "59 different theories" were found in their sample.

This theoretical richness has come about due to the highly inter-disciplinary nature of journalism studies. Theoretical perspectives come predominantly from sociology and political science, but also from cultural studies, language studies, history, and increasingly business, economics, law, technology and philosophy (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 49; Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 9; Zelizer, 2004, p. 8). Each theoretical perspective brings its own assumptions about what journalism is and how this multifaceted phenomenon should be understood. While Ahva & Steensen (2020, p. 39) declared that the "anarchic state" of journalism studies "should be viewed

as a strength, not a weakness", such a view is not compatible with the goals of this thesis. As such, this section gives an overview of key theoretical perspectives of journalism studies to determine which theoretical perspective, or combination of perspectives, is best to draw from in order to establish definitions that help with the analysis of youtubers and whether or not they produce journalism.

2.2.1 Sociology and journalism

Sociological perspectives are widespread in journalism studies. Broadly, they understand journalism "as a kind of social system in which certain roles are performed and practices undertaken" (Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 59). Arguably the most influential sociological perspective in journalism studies is Bourdieu's field theory (Benson & Neveu, (2004). Field theory has often been applied in research that investigates the relationships within journalism, as well as between journalism and other social fields (Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 59).

The dominant sociological theories in journalism studies are those related to a professionalism framework (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 44). These professionalism focused theories have generally been used in three main areas of inquiry: first to analyse historical changes in news producing organisations, specifically the professionalisation of news production jobs; second, to investigate "the professional ideology or culture of journalism: its core values and norms that mark the value-based boundaries of the field" (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 45); and third to question "the legitimacy and jurisdiction of professional journalism as a societal agent, its distinct practices and roles in relation to other professions or political, economic, and cultural fields" (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 45).

The focus on "professional" journalists in sociological perspectives generally rules out youtubers from being included in any conception of a journalist. This is because the starting point of what journalism is focuses on media creators that self-identify as journalists, or people employed under the job title journalist in news organisations. In some cases, the professional journalism field is even argued to be that which is "largely determined by political elites" (Glazunova & Schapals, 2025, p. 1090). In this kind of research, independent media creators, such as youtubers, are often categorised as interlopers, alternative media, or peripheral actors (Eldridge, 2014, p. 2, 2019, p. 11; Engelke, 2019, p. 31; Hanusch & Löhmann, 2023, p. 1294; Holton & Belair-Gagnon, 2018, p. 71).

These categorisations of "non-journalists" create a conceptual boundary for journalism, a boundary that is more porous than other professions such as lawyer where the distinction between lawyer and non-lawyer is extremely formalised and highly regulated. To practice law in Australia, lawyers need a degree, practical legal training and an official finding that that they are "fit and proper", among other requirements (Legal Profession Admission Board of NSW, 2025, p. 4). To work as a journalist for a news organisation it can sometimes be enough to just type and post. The porous boundary of professional journalist has frequently resulted in what has been labelled "boundary work" or "boundary maintenance" where the borders between journalist and non-journalist are negotiated and policed by traditional journalism practitioners (Marjoribanks et al., 2022, p. 4).

Boundary maintenance of journalism is generally performed by journalists in legacy news organisations, though it is often reinforced by journalism researchers who apply sociological perspectives (Carlson & Berkowitz, 2014, p. 391; Kenix, 2019, p. 171). Social media content creators can also contribute to boundary work. Previous studies have shown that some people

label their own content "alternative" as a clear signal to their audience that they are distinct from what they consider to be mainstream media (Andersen et al., 2023; Holt et al., 2019, p. 3; McDowell-Naylor et al., 2023). Though that is not to say they accept other labels such as peripheral or interloper. Conceptualisations that focus on journalism as a profession, or journalist boundaries, are very common in the literature, though they are less suitable for the analysis of independent youtubers than political science perspectives.

2.2.2 Political science and journalism

In contrast to sociological perspectives, political science perspectives comprise journalism theories that focus on such concepts as politics, democracy, publics, and citizens (Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 64). Contemporary society is a mediated one where "media are to us as water is to fish" (Deuze, 2012, p. 10) and it is through media that people learn of politically relevant information. Media is also a site of politics where political actors engage each other; moreover, media organisations are political actors in and of themselves (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 98, 157). Political science perspectives do not focus on the professional journalism field; rather, they direct their lenses at the ubiquitous nature of contemporary media and its integral role in societal power dynamics.

The political science perspective of most relevance to this thesis holds the normative view that journalism is an institution that performs specific functions that are important for the proper functioning of democratic societies. Importantly, this understanding of journalism plays a large role in informing some existing definitions of public interest journalism. And this perspective provides a solid normative framework which allows independent youtubers to be assessed and

placed in wider societal, political, and regulatory contexts. As such, there will be significant attention to the democratic functions of journalism in this chapter.

It has been argued that journalism as an institution is concerned with "the defense of democracy" (Christians et al., 2009, p. 19) and it works to "establish or sustain" democracy (Schudson, 2008, p. 12). Journalism matters for democracy irrespective of the specific theory of democracy that may be adopted (Couldry, 2017, p. 26). Normative conceptualisations of the press, from a political science perspective, hold that journalism supports democracy by performing a number of societal functions, also called roles (Schudson, 2008; Schultz, 1998). The exact articulation, or number, of these functions is not agreed upon, though there are core functions that are widely agreed on. The influential Michael Schudson highlighted the flexible articulation of democratic functions when he detailed his own "six ***or*** seven" democratic functions (emphasis added) (Schudson, 2008, pp. 11–12).

While scholars may expand, split, or combine democratic functions of journalism in their writing, there are "classic and enduring functions and values of journalism as an institution" (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2019, p. 236). These classic enduring functions, or core democratic functions of journalism, include informing citizens about public interest issues (Couldry, 2017, p. 27; Richardson, 2006; Schudson, 2008, p. 13), holding power to account (Hanitzsch et al., 2019b, p. 186; Schudson, 2008, p. 14; Schultz, 1998, p. 22; Wilding et al., 2018, p. 20) and providing a space for public deliberation and expression of public opinion (J. Braun & Gillespie, 2011, p. 385; Habermas, 1992; Schudson, 2008, p. 20).

Emergent and highly influential articulations of these core journalism functions can be seen in the writings of early liberal thinkers such as James Mill, his son John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville. For the Scottish philosopher and historian James Mill, freedom of the press "was the cornerstone of his wider political thought" and the idea of the press providing a check on power is a common theme in his writing (Grint, 2017, p. 364). Writing about such things was not without personal risk as during his life press freedom suffered "sustained attack in early nineteenth-century Britain" (Grint, 2017, p. 364). John Stuart Mill devoted much time to ideas around the importances of public discussion and "the liberty of the press", a major benefit of which he described as "one of the securities against corrupt or tyrannical government" (Mill, 1863, p. 33). Alexis de Tocqueville, after a trip to the United States, wrote extensively on press freedom and how a public properly informed by the press leads to a more stable society (Tocqueville, 1848).

This thesis adopts the political science presumption that democracies benefit when the core journalism functions are performed. However, this is not to say that each individual journalist or media organisation needs to fulfill all of these functions. Rather, if journalism as a whole, within a specific media environment, fulfills them, then democratic societies benefit and are strengthened (McChesney, 2012, p. 682). These core democratic functions of journalism are a useful high bar with which to measure independent youtubers and assess whether their work qualifies as journalism. This is a core premise for this thesis.

The idea of journalism's core democratic functions is more than just an academic exercise. They are evident in government attempts to regulate public interest journalism. Definitions of journalism, and public interest journalism have been the subject of several important policy and regulatory debates in twenty-first century Australia. Based on my own analysis, at least 28 media

related inquiries have been conducted since 2005, 11 of which mention journalism and 19 of which mention public interest (Appendix A).

The Future of Public Interest Journalism Report noted, based on overwhelming evidence, that "even if there is no unanimously accepted single definition of public interest journalism, there are certain behaviours, institutions and principles that have been commonly cited when discussing its role and importance in healthy democracies" (Senate Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism, 2018, p. 2). These include facilitating public discussion, informing the public, and playing a "watchdog on those in power" (Senate Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism, 2018, p. 2). One year later, the *Digital Platforms Inquiry: Final Report* presented the following definition that clearly incorporated democratic functions of journalism:

> "Public interest journalism" is journalism with the primary purpose of recording, investigating and explaining issues of public significance in order to engage citizens in public debate and inform democratic decision making at all levels of government (Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, 2019, p. 285).

These democratic functions of journalism also guide working journalists in both democratic and less democratic countries. They align with how self-identifying journalists view their raison d'etre. This is especially true for the functions of informing and holding power to account. In the Worlds of Journalism Study, more than 20,000 journalists from 67 countries were surveyed on what they considered to be the most important normative roles of journalists (Hanitzsch et al., 2019b). The results of the survey:

> clearly show that it is still the "classic" role concepts – journalists acting as "informers", "reporters", "watchdogs", "investigators", "monitors", and "educators" – that dominate the global imagination of journalists consistently across all sixty-seven countries […and…] the normative core of journalism around the world is still invariably built on the news media's contribution to political processes and conversations (Hanitzsch et al., 2019b, pp. 163, 167).

In the survey, journalism functions associated with concepts such as the fourth estate were "at the heart of journalism's identity in all developed democracies, but also in many less democratic societies" (Hanitzsch et al., 2019b, p. 168).

A theoretical conceptualisation of the democratic functions of journalism does not stipulate the exact format or medium of media texts performing such functions. It does not require these functions to be performed by a specific occupational group or type of person. Nor does it require that specific processes are followed, or actions are performed. What is important is that media creators, and the media texts they create, perform one or more of the democratic functions.

With the democratic functions approach the critical question is not, *who is a journalist?*, but *who is performing the democratic functions of journalism?* An example of this kind of question being asked in the literature comes from Peters & Broersma when they imagine a world without traditional news media organisations or professional journalists and suggest future researchers ask questions that shine a light on scenarios where journalism's democratic functions are "taken over by other institutions that do not label themselves as journalism" (Peters & Broersma, 2017, p. 189). The functions are the focus. This thesis adopts a political science-based, democratic functions

approach to understanding journalism. As such it is necessary to unpack democratic functions in some detail. What follows is an explanation of the three most agreed-upon core democratic functions of journalism: contributing to public sphere discourse; informing the public about public interest issues; and holding power to account.

Contributing to public sphere deliberation

The first core democratic function of journalism is that of contributing to deliberation in the public sphere. This function addresses the democratic need for a space in which all citizens exercise their right to, and perform their duty to, participate in societal decision-making processes (Christiano, 1996, p. 3). Habermas called this space the public sphere and argued that it is critical for maintaining democratic societies (Habermas, 2023, p. 2). In Habermas's idealised conceptualisation of the public sphere, journalism plays an important democratic role by providing a space that is separate and distinct from the state, where "subversive ideas could emancipate themselves from state repression" (Habermas, 2009, p. 136). The public sphere is not a synonym for being in public. It is a conceptual space in which members of society form a "public body" and engage with one another in good faith arguments about issues of societal importance and, through deliberation, form public opinion (Habermas et al., 1974, p. 49).

The concept of the public sphere has evolved since Habermas's original writing on the topic. Many scholars, including Habermas himself, have developed and/or critiqued his original idealised conceptualisation (Habermas, 2023; Karppinen et al., 2008; McNair et al., 2017). Key critiques often centre around the idea that there is a singular public with a singular public sphere, and that everyone has access to it. This ignores groups in society that have no access to large public sphere debates due to insufficient resources, power imbalances, and active

delegitimization efforts by those in power (Eichhorn, 2020; Fraser, 1990; Mouffe, 1999). Both Fraser and Mouffe argue that rather than ignoring inequality, power dynamics, and private interests, their considerations should be included in public debate (Fraser, 1990, p. 77; Mouffe, 1999, p. 752).

In today's mediated society, it is through media texts that citizens engage with each other in public sphere deliberations. In the articulation of the public sphere by Habermas, radio, television, magazines, and newspapers are "media of the public sphere" (Habermas et al., 1974, p. 49). Today however, it is not only newspapers, radio, and television that are the media of the public sphere, but also digital platforms and websites. This is an important development in communication technology. Before the internet, traditional journalism businesses focused on mass media. Mass media required mass audiences and due to dominant advertiser-centric business models, news organisations were incentivised to reach the broadest audiences possible (Banjac, 2022, p. 143; Park et al., 2026a, p. 51). The economic imperative meant that the broad audiences that were targeted needed to have enough wealth to be attractive for advertisers.

The focus of traditional news media businesses on broad, mass audiences, resulted in market failure where citizens who do not form part of attractive market segments for advertisers are underserviced or ignored completely. Such ignored sections of society include people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, people living in regional or isolated areas, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other marginalised groups (Sinclair, 2009). News media market failure means that citizens do not have the opportunity for equal access to information or participation in public sphere deliberations (Banjac, 2022, p. 143). However, the advent of internet technology created the possibility for past market failures to be resolved by increasing

the ability of marginalised sections of society to participate in public sphere deliberations (Banjac, 2022, p. 143).

Given that youtubers are the focus of this thesis, it is worth asking: Is there a public sphere on the internet? There was no need to ask this question when Habermas first articulated his public sphere theory in the 1960s. However, more recently, he concluded that "traditional newspaper publishers and journalists" are the "responsible occupation group" when it comes to facilitating public sphere deliberations (Habermas, 2023, p. 3). Habermas claimed that online spaces were not media "of the public sphere" because they are where "semi-public, fragmented and self-enclosed communications" exist "among exclusive users of social media" and that this situation online is negatively impacting the public sphere (Habermas, 2023, p. 4). This assessment of internet communication seemingly rules out even the possibility that independent youtubers are able to facilitate public sphere deliberation. However, Habermas himself refers to his above assessment of online spaces as "conjecture" (Habermas, 2023, p. 4).

In contrast to Habermas's assertions regarding digital media, many scholars argue that, rather than damaging the public sphere, the fragmentations resulting from the use of the internet has the potential to strengthen the public sphere. It does this by enabling digital content creators to work towards "redressing imbalances of power in representation, questioning the narratives embedded in mainstream, hegemonic media discourse" and "positioning themselves as spaces where underserved voices can be heard, particularly those of minority groups or otherwise marginalized people" (Robertson & Mourão, 2020, p. 1016). There is also a "growing amount of research rejecting the filter bubble hypothesis", demonstrating that people do not restrict themselves to self-enclosed areas of online communication as Habermas feared (Ross Arguedas et al., 2022, p. 30).

This thesis takes a broad and inclusive view of publics and the public sphere that adheres to its fundamental essence. When citizens discuss, deliberate, and argue in good faith about issues of societal importance, issues of public interest, then they are *in* the public sphere.

Informing citizens on public interest issues

Informing citizens on issues of public interest is a commonly cited function of journalism in democracy focused political science perspectives. Scholars have long argued that informing the public about the world, and their place in it is central to journalism (Christians et al., 2009, p. 237; Richardson, 2006). Access to important information allows citizens to engage in society and take part in democratic processes, and it is important that all citizens, irrespective of socio-economic status, have access to such information (McChesney, 2012, p. 682). It allows decisions to be made based on an assessment of relevant new information (Tocqueville, 1848; Schudson, 2008, p. 13).

With this democratic function, the public is informed, via media texts, about public interest issues. But who or what is "the public"? *Public* is a contested term. How the public is conceptualised, and whether there is one or many publics are vigorously debated in the literature. Compelling arguments have been made that multiple publics exist, and that their existence is a beneficial for society (Fraser, 1990; Warner, 2002). For the purposes of this thesis, the *public* in public interest refers to either the totality of people in a society or an identifiable subset of a population that comes together to form a group through shared experiences and discourse (Warner, 2002, p. 51).

The benefits of an informed public are not just theoretical or based on the pure logic-based argument that better information must lead to better outcomes. Studies on voting behaviour, largely from economics disciplines, have shown that an informed public leads to better outcomes for society in terms of less corruption and lowering the impact of disinformation campaigns (Pande, 2011, p. 234). One of the ways an informed public leads to improved outcomes for society is that it reduces the "information advantage" that politicians often have over citizens – an advantage that can be used to "mislead voters", especially in the lead up to elections (Repetto, 2018, p. 3352).

Public interest is yet another contested term, and one that is rarely defined. Even when the primary focus of an academic work is the public interest, it is often not defined. For example, while it is a valuable contribution and used in media law courses, the book *Social Media and the Public Interest: media regulation in the disinformation age* has no definition of public interest (Napoli, 2019). Not defining public interest in the literature is the rule, not the exception. On this issue of defining the public interest, as will be shown in the next chapter, Australian law has more to offer than the academic literature.

Holding Power to Account

The function of holding power to account is the third core democratic function of journalism that enjoys significant agreement (Matheson, 2010, p. 84). It is often referred to by a number of terms, the most common are the watchdog role, investigative journalism (Carson, 2020, p. 5), or as Schultz (1998, p. 22) argues, the "Fourth Estate". It is a function that journalists from both democratic and non-democratic countries rate as important (Hanitzsch et al., 2019b, p. 166).

This function informs the public on issues of public interest, though it does more. This investigator function involves the publication of public interest media content that works to keep a check on individuals and organisations that wield power, especially political and economic power (Schudson, 2008, pp. 14–16; Schultz, 1998, pp. 3, 22). This watchdog function requires proactive efforts to uncover, and report on, hidden or suppressed facts that relate to issues such as corruption, misuse of power, and illegal activities and issues of integrity of the power elite (Carson, 2020, p. 5). This is in contrast to most daily news reporting that "is reactive, gathered from attendance at press conferences, or replicating details from media releases and other supplied information" (Carson, 2020, p. 75).

This investigator function has effects beyond informing the public. The mere possibility that investigative journalism can take place has the ability "to make powerful people tremble" (Schudson, 2008, p. 14). For this effect to take place investigative reports do not need to have a wide audience base. Rather, the effect is achieved if people in power have the belief that at least "some people somewhere are following the news" and that this belief is enough to promote in powerful people "a fear of public embarrassment or public discrediting, public controversy, legal prosecution, or fear of losing an election" (Schudson, 2008, p. 14).

As is the case with journalism more broadly, there is "no universal definition of investigative journalism" or its various other labels (Carson, 2020, p. 53). Carson addressed the lack of definitional agreement on investigative journalism by developing an "Operative Definition", formulated from interviews with almost 50 investigative reporters and "other media specialists" (Carson, 2020, pp. 7–8, 78). This Operative Definition involves nine features of investigative

journalism, five of which are mandatory, that "distinguish 'quality' investigative reporting from straight news storytelling" (Carson, 2020, p. 78). The essential features are phrased as questions by Carson, and they are used to establish whether or not specific journalism content is quality investigative journalism. Carson's essential features include determining if the article is exclusive, contains evidence of skill and research, includes verified facts, and is in the public interest (Carson, 2020, p. 238).

Another influential articulation of investigative journalism is found in a 2011 UNESCO manual for investigative journalists. This manual gives a detailed account of investigative journalism, including a definition stating:

> Investigative journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. It requires using both secret and open sources and documents (Hunter et al., 2011, p. 8).

It goes on to make a clear distinction between investigative journalism and "conventional journalism" (Hunter et al., 2011, p. 9). The manual details three categories of distinction: research, source relations, and outcomes (Hunter et al., 2011, p. 9). A major theme in each of these categories is that the investigative reporter is far more proactive in the journalism creation process. The manual is bookended by comments from Janis Karklins, a spokesperson for UNESCO, who said, "the role media can play as watchdog is indispensable for democracy and it is for this reason that UNESCO fully supports initiatives to strengthen investigative journalism throughout the world" (Hunter et al., 2011, p. 1). The manual has been widely cited in the literature, and is used in journalism teaching resources, a recent example being *Journalism as the fourth emergency service: trauma and resilience* which adopts the UNESCO manual's definition verbatim (Longo-Flint & Price, 2024, p. 162).

The above two conceptualisations of investigative journalism go into great detail and offer a comprehensive idea of how it differs from other forms of journalism. A key aspect of investigative journalism is that it relies on the reporter proactively bringing the story to the public's attention. Without the reporter conducting the investigation the story would not come to light. Investigative journalism is also agenda setting or exclusive. Investigative journalism requires an investigation of facts, rather than relying on a "compilation of opposing viewpoints" (Carson, 2020, p. 238). Importantly, investigative journalism requires significant research. Evidence for this research is observable in the published content through the use of primary sources which include official government documents, legal documents, official statements, interviews, whistleblower statements, research papers, and audio-visual material recorded by the creator (Carson, 2020, p. 238; Nechushtai, 2018, p. 1051; Poell et al., 2022, p. 89).

2.2.3 Other theoretical approaches to journalism

Numerous other theoretical frameworks have been applied to the study of journalism, each with its own focus and assumptions. These approaches include socio-technical theories, business and economic theories, and cultural studies. Socio-technical theories generally are concerned with analysing issues and developments that result from technological change. These theories include technological determinism, affordance theory, and actor-network theory. Business and economic theories applied to journalism include rational choice theory and uses and gratification theory. Cultural studies, in journalism research, has traditionally focused on "unravelling how journalists view themselves, trying to understand the diversity of journalism, and connecting journalistic practices and products to questions of power, ideology, class, ethnicity, gender, identity, and so on" (Steensen & Westlund, 2021, p. 67). When these theoretical perspectives are added to the sociological and political science approaches outlined earlier, it becomes clear that to say that

there is a great range of theoretical approaches to journalism is a grave understatement. Moreover, many of these approaches have limited overlap, and sometimes they are in clear and direct conflict (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 50).

2.3 Definitions: A plethora of verbiage

When looking at theoretical approaches we find anarchy. When we turn to our attention to the more specific issues of definitions, we find similar conceptual disarray. Often the definitional differences come down to whether journalism should be considered an institution, ideology, profession, process (or set of practices), product, industry, or some combination of these. These differing underlying assumptions arise largely due to the different theoretical perspectives where researchers exist "in their own interpretive communities that have produced distinctive definitional sets by which journalism can be identified" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 39). In this section, I catalogue, analyse and compare key definitions of journalism. This necessarily does not include every definition, given the immense range that have been proposed; a priority is given to highly cited works, as well as recent journalism research (Appendix B).

In the academic literature, definitions of journalism and journalists vary significantly, and do not go without challenge or controversy (Malik & Shapiro, 2017, p. 16). While there are examples of detailed definitions, which will be discussed below, it is more common that terms such as journalism and journalist, without definitions, are "used as generalized labels for the broadest possible range of activities associated with news making and the people who engage in them." (Zelizer, 2004, p. 21). In addition, terms such as the press and news media, or even just media, are often used as synonyms for broad ideas of journalism (Zelizer, 2004, p. 26). One illustrative

example is Ritter and Holcomb (2023) and their work on gauging public attitudes towards news media. In the study, they use the terms media, news media, journalism, press, and news all as synonyms, and no definitions are given (Ritter & Holcomb, 2023). Another, more recent, example is the research into the relationship between media and democracy by Schrijvers et al. (2026) in which the terms journalism, media, and journalistic media are used interchangeably and where none is given a definition.

Many definitions of journalism are about activities or processes. Schudson opens his highly cited 2011 book with a definition that centres around the activities of "producing" and "disseminating" information: "Journalism is the business or practice of regularly producing and disseminating information about contemporary affairs of public interest and importance" (Schudson, 2011, p. 3). Stephens writes that, "journalism is the activity of collecting, presenting, interpreting, or commenting upon the news for some portion of the public" (Stephens, 2014, p. xiii). He adds that for journalism "information that can be verified *be* verified – checked and confirmed as thoroughly as possible" (emphasis in original) (Stephens, 2014, p. 129). Activity-based definitions are sometimes worded to centre the journalist, and thus appear to be person-based, but they are not. For example, Koliska et al. (2025) write: "Journalists gather, filter and select information to offer their audiences a sense of orientation in an increasingly complex world" (Koliska et al., 2025, p. 2094).

Shapiro offers an activity-based definition that includes the element of independence where journalism "comprises the activities involved in an independent pursuit of accurate information about current or recent events and its original presentation for public edification" (Shapiro, 2014, p. 561). This was later updated by Malik & Shapiro to include opinion and commentary: "journalism comprises the activities involved in an independent pursuit of, or commentary upon,

accurate information about current or recent events and its original presentation for public edification" (Malik & Shapiro, 2017, p. 16). Zelizer supports the element of independence by writing that the main purpose of journalism comes from its "ability to independently cull and develop new and original information" (Zelizer, 2019, p. 349).

Apart from being defined in terms of activity or process, journalism has been defined as a "professional ideology" which is "a collection of shared beliefs, norms and rules that guide journalistic work and give journalists meaning to their work" (Møller, 2022, p. 1796). Drawing from influential works, Mark Deuze (2005, p. 446) summarised a "holistic" understanding of the professional ideology of journalism and created five categories of ideal traits or values: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics (Deuze, 2005, pp. 446, 458). The first category, public service, has journalists be "watchdogs" and "active collectors and disseminators of information" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). As discussed previously, the concept of watchdog is borrowed from political science theories on journalism. The second category, objectivity, prescribes that "journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). The comment on credibility here is interesting as it assumes a causal connection between objectivity and credibility. The third category, autonomy, aligns with some activity-based definitions and requires journalists be "free and independent in their work" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). The fourth category, immediacy, means that "journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). And the fifth category, ethics, demands "journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). While not a definition, this conceptualisation of journalism has been highly influential, with Deuze's work cited thousands of times.

While the above definitions could be used to analyse youtubers, which is the central project of this thesis, other definitions are less suitable as they are overly broad or circular. One broad definition of journalism is "a discursive social institution that spawns a kaleidoscope of journalistic cultures, which are manifested as products of local societal and professional contexts" (Hanitzsch et al., 2019a, p. 16). One circular definition is "we understand journalism as any form of professional journalism within institutionalized settings, irrespective of journalistic beat and employment type, including freelance journalists" (Degen et al., 2024a, p. 403). While these definitions are from important works of journalism studies, they have little applicability for this thesis.

Alongside these definitions in the literature, it is revealing that the majority of journalism focused studies do not define key terms at all. According to my literature analysis of 148 publications, three quarters of journalism-focused studies do not include definitions for "journalism", "journalist", or "news" (Appendix B). In some cases, attention is drawn to a study's lack of definition (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 177). Rather than define journalism or journalist, Deuze and Witschge instead argue for telling "stories by those who consider themselves journalists and/or are defined as such by others" (Deuze & Witschge, 2020, p. 24). As will be seen later in Chapter 7, a person's professional self-identification as a journalist is important for some legal understandings of journalism, however it is far from sufficient.

In many cases the reader is left to assume the meaning of journalism and related terms. This is most common with professionalism focused studies, possibly because the meaning is assumed to be obvious. Examples include works from Engelke (2019), Hayes (2024), Banjac (2022), and Esser and Neuberger (2019). Engelke (2019), who did not include journalism definitions in her systematic literature review on participatory journalism, distinguished "three stages of the

professional news production process: (1) formation; (2) dissemination; and (3) interpretation of news" (Engelke, 2019, p. 32). This is arguably an activity-based understanding of journalism; however, it is not a definition and there is no further elaboration of what journalism is. The paper also discussed the relationship of audiences and journalists, and the boundaries between them, with journalism assumed to be the activities of professional journalists working in traditional news media jobs.

Hayes (2024) discussed journalism boundaries with a focus on changing technology and the digital labour of "salaried journalists and editors" (Hayes, 2024, p. 804). Definitions were not given for journalist or journalism; their meanings are assumed. This is common. And in what is a common theme among studies that do not provide definitions, Banjac (2022) discussed the professional field of journalism. Her study provided an intersectional exploration into audience expectations of journalism. Rather than providing a definition of journalist or journalism, the study claimed that "journalistic roles are common knowledge to audiences" without elaborating on what these roles are (Banjac, 2022, p. 129).

Esser & Neuberger (2019) discussed journalism, journalists and news as both separate and interchangeable terms. Also, as with the above examples, no definitions were given. However, this example shows something more. It is an example of how the "anarchy" of journalism studies can extend into individual studies. The paper mixes language of political science perspectives into what is ultimately a sociological perspective. Esser & Neuberger discussed the democratic functions of journalism, though without going into depth. However, they made clear they view journalism as what journalists do. Journalists and democratic functions of journalism are seen to be two distinct phenomena that can exist separately from one another, and they posit the question of how journalists must "react strategically to the loss of their monopoly on the

informational and power-scrutinizing role" (Esser & Neuberger, 2019, p. 196). As is often the case, the focus is on how the "professional journalist field" can stay relevant, rather than what journalism is, why it's important, and how it can be fostered.

2.4 Conclusion: Journalism definitions – a work in progress

Journalism has been studied by researchers from a vast range of academic disciplines. A result of this is that journalism has been conceptualised in numerous ways as the theoretical lenses of each discipline shape how researchers understand journalism. In some cases, researchers put forward explicit definitions for journalism-related terms such as "journalist" or "journalism". However, in the majority of cases such terms are left undefined or assumed (Appendix B).

However, an "I know it when I see it" approach is not good enough when it comes to journalism. It can and should be defined. While there are definitions in the literature, they invariably differ, often in significant ways. In the face of the theoretical and definitional differences in the academic studies, my approach is to focus on the *purpose* of journalism to analyse youtubers. This purpose is to perform one or more of journalism's core democratic functions which are:

- informing the public about public interest issues,
- contributing to public sphere deliberation,
- holding power to account.

This is, admittedly, a narrow account of the purpose of journalism. It excludes, for instance, both a community-building element and an audience-engaging element contained in some conceptualisations of journalism. In this way, it arguably excludes sporting results and music

reviews. My point here is not, however, to argue that sport reports and music reviews are not journalism. Rather, I want to propose a deliberately narrow account of the purpose of journalism, in order to use it to then articulate a narrow definition of journalism. Or rather, I will articulate two definitions of journalism: "journalism", which is broad; and "public interest journalism", which is narrow. The larger aim of this thesis is to test whether youtubers qualify for this narrow purpose and this narrow definition of public interest journalism. If they do, we will be able to say with confidence that these youtubers produce journalism.

Journalism should be defined for a number of reasons which include providing clarity to audiences, educators and practitioners so there is a shared understanding of what journalism is and why it is important. Defining public interest journalism with a strong emphasis on journalism's democratic functions makes clear why it is important. A definition based on the core democratic functions also allows traditional and non-traditional media producers alike to be analysed without the need to debate boundaries of an often vaguely articulated professional field.

Unpacking how journalism is understood in the literature is only the first part of my analysis of what journalism is. The second part involves investigating how Australian law understands journalism. That is the task of the next chapter. In this chapter, I have analysed the academic literature, with a focus on journalism studies, to propose a narrow account of the *purpose* of journalism. At the end of the next chapter, after my legal analysis, I will build upon that purpose, which is founded on the core democratic functions of journalism, to propose two journalism-related definitions: a broad definition of journalism; and a narrow definition of public interest journalism.

Chapter 3 – Journalism in Australian law

3.1 Introduction: The many journalisms of the law

Journalism has a special place in the law. This special place is made clear by the legal privileges, exemptions and special defences for journalists, which come in a range of forms and levels of significance. Some privileges allow journalists to use audio-visual equipment in certain areas of courts (*Court Security Act 1980* (Vic), ss 4A, 4C(3)(a)) and to access court documents (*Criminal Procedure Rules 2005* (WA), s 51(2A)(i)). Others allow journalists to apply for fee waivers on freedom of information requests (*Right to Information Act 2009* (Tas) s 16(2)(ba)). And then there are privileges and exemptions which are much more serious and significant. These include the special defence for journalists remaining in, or entering, areas of foreign countries declared as insurgency or terrorism hotspots (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) ss 119.2(3)(f), 119.3(1)) and the shield laws under which journalists can refuse to reveal confidential sources, unless it is in the public interest to do so (*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) s 126K(1-2)).

The previous chapter showed that journalism studies is in a state of "theoretical anarchy" (Ahva & Steensen, 2020, p. 50). This chapter shows that the law's use of journalism-related terms involves an analogous legal anarchy. Numerous contradictory understandings of journalism exist in various jurisdictions and areas of law. The contradictions run deep, to the extent that even some individual Acts contain multiple and divergent understandings of journalism. This chapter analyses the ways in which Australian law understands journalism; it will provide a legal lens through which youtubers will be later assessed as to whether they qualify as journalists, and whether their content qualifies as journalism, under the law.

This chapter shows that journalism understandings in law are inconsistent and contradictory. But it does more than this. Based on my analysis, I find that there are key themes that emerge from legal understandings of journalism. These themes include informing the public and having ethical considerations. They were identified by analysing 78 separate pieces of legislation, 59 of which have understandings of journalism which fit into four basic categories: activity-based; person-based; organisation-based; and content-based. Findings in this chapter also concern statutory definitions. Within the Acts containing understandings of journalism, 27 different definitions for journalism-related terms were identified. These terms include "journalist", "journalism" and "news publisher". Also, in numerous Acts, journalism understandings are present without any journalism-related definition. This is not the first study to attempt to survey Australian law for journalism understandings, though this is the first that moves beyond the narrow focus on definitions. The scale of analysis in this chapter has not been done before for Australian law.

The analysis in this chapter centres on 78 Acts that are relevant for journalists. I sorted these Acts into three categories: those that had an understanding of journalism that included a definition of a journalism-related term; those that had an understanding of journalism without a defined term; and those that had no understanding of journalism at all. Journalism-related terms of interest in this thesis are: "journalism"; "journalist"; "news"; "media"; "correspondent"; and "publish". All compound nouns and word class variations of these terms were also included. In this chapter, an Act has a journalism "understanding" if there is some reference to journalism-related terms. An Act does not require such terms to have an accompanying definition to be judged as having an understanding. A definition is where an explanation of a term is explicitly signposted, using "is", "define" or "means", as being equivalent to the term, or if it is listed in a dedicated dictionary list in an Act. For this chapter I also reviewed 397 court judgments and 288

investigations by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as well as various peripheral legal documents as needed. Further details are given in the Method (see 3.3).

The diverse and inconsistent nature of journalism in Australian law presented a challenge for structuring this chapter. My early attempts included categorising the data by statute, jurisdiction and journalism-related terms. However, these early formulations were more confusing than illuminating, because, as my analysis shows, definitions and understandings of journalism do not neatly align in those ways. For example, some understandings of journalism cross several jurisdictions but conflict with other understandings within the same area of law. Others are consistent within an area of law but inconsistent across jurisdictions. Some are completely unique and are found within a single piece of legislation. In addition to this, some individual Acts have multiple, contrasting journalism understandings.

In the next section there is a discussion of previous attempts to investigate how Australian law understands journalism. That is followed by a detailing of the chapter's method. Key findings are then presented, after which there is an in-depth discussion of journalism understandings in several areas of law. This discussion exemplifies just how inconsistent and contradictory the law, as a whole, is on journalism. Finally, I discuss the way forward and introduce my definition of public interest journalism that will be later used to assess youtubers. The analysis in this chapter clearly demonstrates that there is no overarching, consistent understanding of how journalism is understood in law. There is no cohesive principle or common standard or purpose. Rather, there are myriad understandings, some that include definitions, others that do not.

The results of this chapter will be applied to later analysis in two ways. Firstly, journalism themes that emerge throughout my analysis of legal understandings of journalism will be used, together with the insights of the previous chapter, to formulate a definition of public interest journalism that will be used to assess youtubers in Chapter 5. Secondly, the understandings and definitions identified in this chapter will be applied directly in Chapter 7, where youtubers will be assessed in regard to whether they meet the specific requirements of individual legal understandings and definitions.

3.2 Previous surveys of journalism in Australian law

Issues around journalism understandings in Australian law have seldom been explored in the academic literature. Johnston and Wallace (2017, p. 850) analysed "jurisdictional clashes" when it comes to understanding what journalism is, both inside and outside Australia. In a multi-country analysis, they found that the legislature and judiciary are increasingly making "definitional determinations" about journalism issues (Johnston & Wallace, 2017, p. 851). They found that the attempt by the law to understand who a journalist is, and what news media is, remains a "work in progress, as courts, legislators and policy makers rethink and reframe the answers to these questions" (Johnston & Wallace, 2017, p. 862).

More recently, Greste (2023) argued that legal definitions of journalism terms can be "loosely" categorised into four categories which he called "the Four Ps": process, person, product and purpose (Greste, 2023, p. 29). He claimed that the "traditional legal approach" has been to focus on the person (Greste, 2023, p. 29). However, Greste (2023, p. 31) argued that the best way to understand journalism, including in law, is not by defining it in terms of person, product, or

purpose. Rather he advocated for a "process definition" (Greste, 2023, p. 33). This approach focuses on activities concerning "the way information is gathered, organised and presented" (Greste, 2023, p. 32). This approach sidelines the purpose of journalism, which Greste suggests "we stop worrying about" (Greste, 2023, p. 31).

A more comprehensive work on legal definitions of journalism in Australian law is by Ananian-Welsh (2022), who gave a detailed analysis of statutory definitions of "journalist" and "journalism". In the 18 statutes included in the study, 11 definitions of journalist and one of journalism were identified and analysed (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 451). These definitions were placed into one of six categories: the leading approach; the process-based approach; the concise approach; the material-based approach; the activity-based approach; and the organisation-based approach (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 457).

The leading approach reflects an understanding of journalism which is based on "journalist" being an occupation or profession which involves publishing in news media (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 460). The process-based approach is not defined; however, the *Evidence Act 2011* (NT) and the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) are included in this category (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, pp. 461–462). The definitions for journalist in these Acts are categorised as process-based because they involve a "two-step process" whereby a person first collects newsworthy information and then publishes or comments on it in a news medium. The concise approach also includes only two pieces of legislation, the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) and the *Evidence Act 2011* (ACT). The definitions in these Acts are considered concise because of their "focus on journalistic sources" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 462). The material-based approach involves statutes making clear what "journalism" is. As such it avoids the issues of definitions in the leading approach in which definitions mention journalism without defining it, thus creating the "potentially circular and

confusing impression that a journalist is a person who engages in journalism" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 465). The activity approach includes definitions that offer "a more detailed approach to defining journalist, which includes a list of specific activities a journalist will engage in" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 465). And finally, the organisation-based approach includes definitions "which constrain journalists by direct reference to their professional affiliation and, specifically, their employers' ethical obligations and licensing" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 466).

Based on her analysis of statutory definitions, Ananian-Welsh opted for the concise approach, arguing that the definition in the Commonwealth and ACT Evidence Acts presented "a preferred definition of journalist (or journalism)" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 478). The definition that she presents as preferable is "a journalist means a person who is engaged and active in the publication of news" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 478). Her reasoning for such a broad and vague definition is that it is "adaptable across legislative contexts" and that it is "suited to the 'constant flux' and 'permanent instability' of the modern media landscape" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 478). Ananian-Welsh softens her recommendation by saying that she is not "advising a 'one size fits all' approach to defining a journalist in law" and that "statutory goals" could justify measures such as a list of considerations that a court may consider. Ananian-Welsh (2022) stressed that her study is deliberately limited to "those instances where the terms journalist or journalism have been used and defined" and that "a truly comprehensive analysis would encompass statutory descriptions and broader engagements with the notions of journalist, journalism and news reporting" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 459).

This chapter provides a more comprehensive analysis than previous studies. It investigates the numerous ways in which journalism is understood in legislation, whether defined or not. It also encompasses a wider range of journalism-related terms, including "core news", "journalistic

material", "news", and "media organisation". I also go beyond statutes to include relevant case law, codes of conduct overseen by the ACMA, and explanatory notes and memoranda for Bills. This broad scope is necessary because law is more than just pieces of legislation, and key terms found within legislation are applied or interpreted, often in courts. The breadth of this analysis enables a comprehensive overview of the Australian law's approach to journalism.

3.3 Method

The focus of this chapter is on how the law understands journalism, whether defined or not. As such, an exhaustive analysis of the objectives, implementation, or effectiveness of legislation is not the goal of this chapter. For this chapter I employ a "multi-method legal research" approach which combines content analysis, close reading and doctrinal research. This kind of approach, which combines doctrinal and non-doctrinal methods, is "gaining increasing recognition" in legal research as a pragmatic approach to complex legal questions (Bhat, 2020, p. 496).

The first phase of analysis in this chapter involved content analysis which is understood as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 24). A content analysis was conducted on 78 state and federal statutes. The selection of these 78 Acts began with key areas of law that are commonly associated with journalism. These include broadcasting, defamation, privacy, criminal law, contempt & open justice, freedom of information. Then the *Westlaw AU* database was searched for additional Acts that had reference to journalism-related terms such as "news", "journalist", "journalism" and "media". If an Act was found to have reference to such a term, other similar Acts would be included in the sample. For example, the *Court Security Act*

2005 (NSW) was found to have reference to "journalist", so that led to Court Security Acts from other jurisdictions being included in the study.

For each Act, this content analysis sought to identify the core journalism understanding, journalism-related definitions, specific roles of journalists, key journalism themes, and journalist-related defences, privileges and exemptions (Appendix C). The initial analysis was conducted in 2022 and was repeated in 2026 to double-check the data and incorporate changes and developments, such as amendments, rulings and policy actions up until 28 January 2026. In the content analysis, Acts were first sorted into two categories: those with a reference to journalism-related terms and those with no reference to journalism-related terms. Via this method, 59 of the original 78 Acts analysed were found to contain at least one reference to a journalism-related term. Then, the content analysis involved identifying: the base-types of journalism understanding that the journalism-related terms represented; explicit journalism-related provisions; journalist roles; and journalism themes (Appendix C).

The second phase applied close reading and doctrinal research. Close reading is understood in this thesis as "the detailed observation of a work, based on immersion into the piece sustained over repeated viewing, supplemented by the systematic notation of relevant details, leading to an explication and higher order analysis of the work" (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2012, p. 395). Doctrinal research is the most frequently applied method of legal research (Bhat, 2020, p. 143). It is a legal method that involves first identifying the relevant law and then interpreting and analysing the associated texts (Hutchinson, 2018, p. 51) – often using techniques that are closely related to what disciplines such as media studies call textual analysis or close reading analysis. As such, in this chapter, the line between the two methods is not distinct.

The 59 Acts identified in the content analysis as having journalism-related terms were analysed in greater depth through close reading analysis and doctrinal research. This included analysing the Acts in conjunction with relevant case law and regulations. To identify relevant case law, I conducted a systematic search for cases using the *Westlaw AU* database. The first stage of this search involved using relevant keywords that included journalist, journalism, news, media, and relevant compound nouns. Following this, a search was conducted on every relevant section of each of the 59 Acts. A relevant section is one that included a journalism-related term. Cases that included relevant sections were analysed to determine whether they contained discussion or interpretation of journalism-related terms. For this process a total 397 judgments were reviewed. Almost none of the cases analysed dealt with how journalism-related terms are to be interpreted and were therefore of limited use to this thesis. As such, the focus of this chapter is on statutory law. Where relevant case law, regulations, or actions by regulatory bodies exist, they have been included. A rare example of relevant case law is the judgment in *Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753 which delves into the meaning of "journalist" for the Commonwealth *Evidence Act*. The scope of this research did not extend to checking caselaw in other common law jurisdictions where there might be some otherwise relevant jurisprudence. That would be necessary for a comprehensive doctrinal analysis, but it goes beyond the scope of this thesis as the focus is explicitly on clarifying what Australian law says about journalism.

Broadcasting regulation was also analysed. The importances of the ACMA to the understanding of journalism in Australian media regulation, and the complexities that this introduced, required two supplementary content analyses. The first of these was conducted on the 11 ACMA registered broadcaster codes of conduct (Appendix F). For this content analysis only one phase was required which involved identifying journalism themes within the codes. In addition to analysing the codes, and to ensure additional possible journalism themes were identified, a

content analysis was conducted on every ACMA investigation that was finalised between 2018 and 2024, which totalled 288 reports (Appendix E). Similar to the content analysis of statutes, the first phase of this analysis involved reviewing the reports to determine whether they refer to journalism or not. The second phase then analysed the reports to determine what journalism themes the reports contained. Through the analysis of six years' worth of investigations, it became apparent that a level of saturation had been reached in terms of identifying emergent journalism themes.

3.4 Findings: Journalism understandings, definitions and themes

3.4.1 Four base types of journalism understandings

A key finding of this analysis of 78 Acts and related legal material is that there are four base types of journalism understandings in state and federal legislation. The starting point for these base types was influenced and inspired by the articulation of journalism understandings in the works of Ananian-Welsh (2022) and Greste (2023). Based on my analysis and interpretation, the categories for these base understandings of journalism in Australian law are activity-based, person-based, organisation-based, and content-based. Activity-based understandings of journalism have, at their core, the activities, practices, or actions that need to be done in order to qualify for the term being defined. A person-based understanding, on the other hand, places a person at the centre without any elaboration on what the person is supposed to do. Often the person-based understanding is left undefined. Similarly, an organisation-based understanding has a media organisation at its core without any details on the actions required by the organisation, or specification of content requirements. Content-based understandings have media content at

the core of their journalism understandings where actions and content producers are secondary considerations.

These categories indicate the core, or basis, of a legal understanding of journalism. If, for instance, a legal understanding of journalism is activity-based, it means that the core elements of that understanding are specific activities, processes, actions, or practices. It does not exclude a person, organisation, content, purpose or any other element, from being part of that understanding, but does not posit them at the core of the understanding. Also, the defined word is not taken at face value. For example, if a piece of legislation defines the word "journalist", it is not automatically categorised as a person-based understanding of journalism. If journalist is defined by listing specific activities, then it will be categorised as an activity-based understanding.

A journalism "understanding" is not the same as a definition. When an Act includes journalism-related terms without any definitions of those terms, it still has an understanding of journalism, even if it is implied and not made explicit. An example of this is the *Criminal Code Act 1983* (NT) (s 276H (4)(b)) which includes a defence for the offence of publishing material about offending conduct if that material is published for a journalistic purpose. This Act has no definitions for any journalism-related term, including journalistic purposes, yet it still has an understanding of journalism.

This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of journalism in Australian law. It is an analysis that goes beyond definitions. Of the 78 Acts analysed, 59 of them contained at least one reference to a journalism-related term, thus they had at least one of the four base type journalism understandings. The remaining 19 Acts had no reference, implicit or explicit, to anything

journalism related and were therefore excluded from further analysis. As will be seen below, the results show that even at the foundational level there is far from any consensus over what journalism is in Australian law. Of the base types of journalism understanding described above, there is no one that stands out as being dominant in law. Most Acts have a single journalism understanding. However, adding to the complexity and lack of consensus is the finding that eight Acts were found to have multiple different base types of journalism understandings, some of which included definitions (Table 1). Within the 59 Acts that contained a reference to a journalism-related term, a total of 76 separate journalism understandings were identified, each of them one of the four base types as described above.

Table 1: Acts with more than one journalism understanding.

Act	Base type of journalism understanding	Defined terms
Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth)	1 activity based. 2 content based.	• Journalist • News or current affairs program • Local news program
Competition and Consumer Act 2010	2 content based.	• Core news • Covered news
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)	1 activity based. 1 person based.	• Journalism • Media organisation
Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)	3 activity based. 3 content based. 1 person based.	• Journalistic capacity (circular definition, doesn't relate to all understandings in the Act)
Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)	1 content based. 1 person based.	• No definitions
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	1 activity based. 2 person based. 1 organisation based. 1 content based.	• Media organisation • Journalist

		• Journalistic material • 2 understandings have no definition
Summary Offences Act 1953 (SA)	1 organisation based. 1 activity based.	• Media organisation • Activity-based understanding has no definition
Victoria Police Act 2013 (Vic)	1 activity based. 1 person based.	• Journalism • Media organisation

Activity-based understandings of journalism

This chapter provides the most comprehensive identification and analysis of activity-based journalism understandings in Australian law to date. This analysis shows that activity-based understandings of journalism are the most common type making up around 38% of identified journalism understandings (Figure 1). In total, activity-based understandings of journalism were identified 29 times in 25 different Acts (Appendix C). This type of understanding focuses on activities, processes, actions, or practices that a person or business does. This understanding of journalism is not limited to the status of a person or organisation, nor is there emphasis on journalistic content. In other words, an activity-based understanding of journalism is predominantly about what a person or business does, not who or what they are.

Activity-based understandings of journalism are also common in theoretical perspectives in journalism studies. Definitions that adopt this understanding of journalism have been described as a "process definition" (Greste, 2023, p. 33), "functional definition" (Shapiro, 2014, p. 561), and "activity-based approaches" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 465). As seen in the previous chapter, many definitions in the literature are activity based even when not explicitly labelled as such. For

example, the formulations by Schudson (2011, p. 3), Stephens (2014, p. xiii) and Koliska et al. (2025, p. 2094) all define journalism around activities.

The "functional definition" of journalism given by Shapiro (2014, p. 561) is: "the activities involved in an independent pursuit of accurate information about current or recent events and its original presentation for public edification". And in Greste's argument for a process definition, he presented the Alliance for Journalists' Freedom's working definition, which has a focus on the activities of "investigating, collecting, verifying and/or preparing, or editing, for dissemination of information, commentary, opinion or analysis, including but not limited to news or current affairs" (Greste, 2023, p. 33). Ananian-Welsh (2022, p. 465) includes "activity-based approaches" in her analysis of Australian statutory definitions. There is no definition for these approaches, but she gives as examples the definitions of journalist in the *Court Security Act 2005* (NSW) and the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) which include "a list of specific activities a journalist will engage in" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 465).

Person-based understandings of journalism

The person-based understanding of journalism in Australian law has been argued to have traditionally been the most common as it is a legacy, pre-internet, understanding of journalism (Greste, 2023, p. 29). However, my analysis shows that it is currently less common than activity-based understandings with only around 26% of identified journalism understandings being person-based (Figure 1). Person-based understandings were identified 21 times in 20 Acts.

Acts that have a person-based understanding of journalism often use the term journalist and discuss the term in relation to job status, or engagement in journalism practice where the "practice" is vague and not elaborated. While many Acts with this understanding have definitions, Acts that refer to journalists without definitions also fall into this category. Put simply, a person-based understanding of journalism is predominantly about who a journalist is, rather than what a journalist does or what they produce.

Content-based understandings

Content-based understandings of journalism, found in 16 Acts, make up almost a quarter of journalism understandings (Figure 1). At their core sits media content. The primary focus is not activities, people, nor media organisations. I place journalism understandings in this category when the relevant law centres its understanding around media content. For example, media content could be said to include reports on news or a topic of public interest. The fundamental core of this understanding is content and what it contains. The primary focus is not who a person is, what actions went into the creation of content, nor the nature of the organisation that may have created the content. While these elements may be present in an understanding of journalism in this category, they are not the core focus.

Organisation-based understandings

The smallest group of journalism understandings is organisation-based. It is found in the fewest statutes and fewest areas of law, making up only about 11% of journalism understandings (Figure 1). This category of journalism understanding involves the focus being clearly on media

organisations, rather than who journalists are, what journalists do, or on journalism content. Of the eight Acts with this type of understanding, there are only two defined terms, "media organisation" and "news media organisation" (Appendix D). Six Acts share a definition of news media organisation, one Act has a definition for media organisation, and the remaining Act has an undefined organisation-based understanding of journalism.

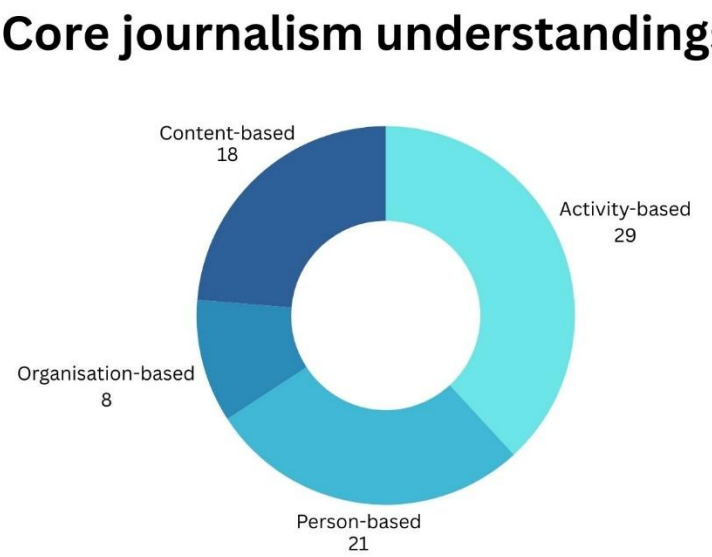

Figure 1: Instances of base journalism understandings, State & Federal Acts, n 76.

3.4.2 Journalism definitions in law

For an Act to have an understanding of journalism it needs not have a definition. However, many Acts do. Of the 59 Acts with journalism understandings, 37 of them have at least one journalism definition. In total, I have identified and analysed 27 different journalism definitions in Australian statutory law (Appendix D). The most common journalism term defined is "journalist" with 12 different definitions for the term among 20 Acts. Other defined journalism terms include "core news", "journalism", "journalistic material", and "news media organisation"

(Figure 2). For the full list of statutory definitions, and the Acts that contain them, see Appendix D.

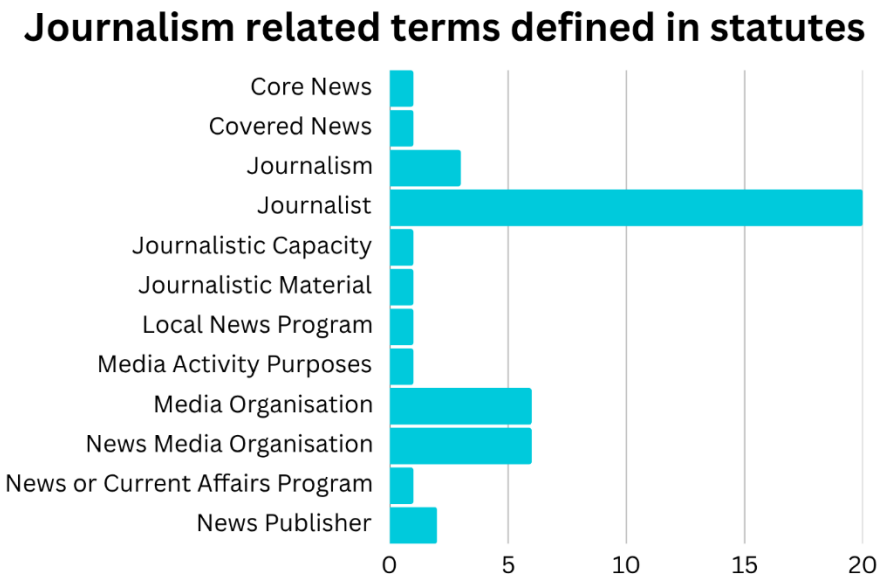

Figure 2. Frequency of defined terms in State & Federal statutes.

3.4.3 Key themes in legal understandings of journalism

Seven key themes were identified in the content analysis of the 76 journalism understandings in state and federal statutes (Figure 3). These are:

- informing the public,
- informing the public about public interest issues,
- contributing to public sphere deliberation,
- being part of a profession,
- engaging in business,
- having ethical considerations,
- being in an occupation.

Figure 3 shows the themes identified in Acts and the how many times they were identified. To be considered a key theme it needed to occur in at least 10 or more times in Acts. Informing the public means that there is reference to reporting on, or publishing news or information for public consumption. Informing the public about public interest issues requires explicit mention of the phrase "public interest". Contributing to public sphere deliberation includes reference to publishing commentary, opinion, or analysis of news or current events. Being part of a profession means that the journalism understanding includes reference to the profession of journalism, though it is often left undefined exactly what this profession entails. The theme of engaging in business means that the journalism understanding applies to a media organisation rather than an individual person or that there is an explicit mention of the business of journalism. Having ethical considerations means that there is some requirement or emphasis put on a code of ethics, or code of conduct, or on commonly accepted journalism ethical principles such as fairness and harm minimisation. Finally, being in an occupation means that a person is required to be employed as a journalist or receive payment for their journalism work.

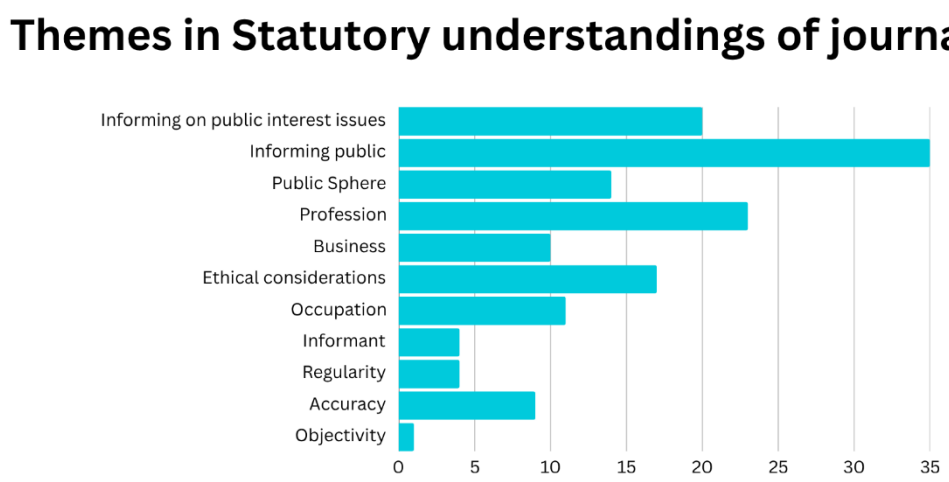

Figure 3. Themes in understandings of journalism in State and Federal Acts.

3.4.4 Journalism's democratic functions in statutes

A significant finding in this chapter is that most journalism understandings in Australian statutes do not include any of the three core democratic functions of journalism which were discussed at length in Chapter 2 (see 2.4). These democratic functions are:

- informing the public about public interest issues,
- contributing to public sphere deliberation,
- holding power to account.

Of the 59 Acts with reference to journalism-related terms, only 24 included at least one democratic function in their understandings of journalism. Seventeen Acts included in their journalism understanding the democratic function of informing the public about public interest issues and 12 Acts included the democratic function of contributing to public sphere deliberation. No Australian statute was found to have the function of holding power to account.

3.5 Analysis of key areas of law

3.5.1 Scope of this section

In this section I analyse six areas of law that have serious potential impacts on journalism. This analysis exemplifies and gives depth to the data presented above which includes all 78 Acts. More importantly for this thesis, they provide detailed insights into how Australian law understands journalism. To demonstrate how Australian law understands journalism, a primary goal of this chapter, it is not necessary to give detailed descriptions of each one of the 78 Acts included in this analysis, though the results above and the data in Appendix C include all 78 Acts

included in this chapter. Of the Acts that contain journalism understandings, 37 are discussed in this section while 22 are not (Table 2).

Some of the Acts not covered in this section are very important for journalism. For example, the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* (Cth) (Division 4C) is significant because it enables the government to retain people's metadata, with added provisions to help journalists protect their sources. However, press freedoms are not the focus of this chapter, and this Act does not add significant insights to those discussed below.

Other Acts that are not analysed this section are those that were found to have a conspicuous absence of journalism understandings. These Acts were included in the content analysis because they were expected to have at least a reference to journalism-related terms either because an Act is heavily focused on telecommunications, or because similar Acts in other jurisdictions refer to journalism-related terms. An example of this is the *Tasmanian Evidence Act 2001* (Tas). Evidence Acts contain provisions amounting to shield laws which protect journalists from being compelled to give evidence that would reveal their sources. However, the *Tasmanian Evidence Act* is unique among these Acts in that it has no understanding of journalism. It has a complete absence of all journalism-related terms. It does, however, have a provision for what it calls "protected confidence" where the court may direct that evidence may not be used if involved a protected confidence (*Evidence Act 2001* (Tas) s 126B). In the Act, protected confidence is defined as:

> a communication made by a person in confidence to another person (in this Division called the "confidant") (a) in the course of a relationship in which the confidant was acting in a professional capacity (b) when the confidant was under an express or

> implied obligation not to disclose its contents, whether or not the obligation arises under law or can be inferred from the nature of the relationship between the person and the confidant (*Evidence Act 2001* (Tas) s 126A(1)(a-b)).

This provision is broad, and it is not specifically limited to journalists, though they could be covered by this provision. As such it is often referred to as a shield law despite lacking mention of journalism related themes (Lukacs, 2023, p. 66). Other Acts that have a conspicuous lack of journalism understanding can be seen below in Table 2.

According to my analysis, the six areas of law are indicative of the approach of the 59 Acts that contain reference to journalism-related terms. The six areas of law analysed below are: laws to protect journalist sources; broadcasting services; criminal law; privacy; defamation; and the News Media Bargaining Code.

Table 2: Acts analysed and not analysed in this section.

Acts with journalism-related terms (analysed in this section)	**Acts with journalism-related terms (not analysed in this section)**	**Acts without journalism-related terms (not analysed in this section)**
- *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) - *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) - *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) - *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) - *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) - *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) - *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) - *Criminal Code Act 1983* (NT)	- *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (Cth) - *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) - *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) - *Court Information Act 2010* (NSW) - *Court Procedures Act 2004* (ACT) - *Court Security Act 2005* (NSW) - *Court Security Act 1980* (Vic) - *Court Security Act 2017* (Tas)	- *Australian Border Force Act 2015* (Cth) - *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* (Cth) - *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979* (Cth) - *Court Security Act 1998* (NT) - *Court Security Act 2013* (Cth) - *Crimes Act 1900 (ACT)* - *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas)

- *Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913* (WA) - *Criminal Procedure Rules 2005* (WA) - *Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002* (ACT) - *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic) - *Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) - *Defamation Act 2005* (Qld) - *Defamation Act 2005* (Tas) - *Defamation Act 2005* (SA) - *Defamation Act 2005* (NT) - *Defamation Act 2005* (WA) - *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) - *Evidence Act 2011* (ACT) - *Evidence Act 1995* (NSW) - *Evidence Act 2025* (WA) - *Evidence Act 1929* (SA) - *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) - *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) - *Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* (NT) - *Magistrates' Court (General) Rules 2005* (WA) - *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Cth) - *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023* (Cth) - *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) - *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022* (NSW) - *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (Qld)	- *Court Suppression and Non-Publication Orders Act 2010* (NSW) - *District Court Act 1973* (NSW) - *Federal Court and Family Court of Australia Act 2021* (Cth) - *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth) - *Geneva Convention Act 1957* (Cth) - *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) - *Open Courts Act 2013* (Vic), - *Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Act 2023* (Cth) - *Right to Information Act 2009* (Tas) - *Serious Offenders Act 2018* (Vic) - *Summary Offences Act 2005* (Qld) - *Supreme Court Act 1970* (Cth) - *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* (Cth) - *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* (Cth)	- *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) - *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* (SA) - *Evidence Act 2001* (Tas) - *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) - *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (SA) - *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (ACT) - *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) - *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth)* - *Public Information Act 2010* (NT) - *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) - *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld)

- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (SA) - *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (WA) - *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (ACT) - *Summary Offences Act 1953* (SA) - *Victoria Police Act 2013* (Vic)		

3.5.2 Laws to protect journalist sources

As noted above, numerous statutes include provisions, known as "shield laws", that are designed to offer some protection for journalists against legal obligations that would otherwise require them to reveal their confidential sources (Lukacs, 2023, p. 66). This key area of law exemplifies the diversity of journalism understandings in Australian law. The primary statutes that contain shield law provisions are Evidence Acts, of which Australia has nine. Across these nine Acts, however, there are five different definitions of "journalist". Moreover, five of the Evidence Acts have activity-based understandings of journalism and three have person-based understandings and none has content or organisation-based understandings. And, as we have seen, Tasmania's *Evidence Act* not only lacks a definition, but it also lacks any journalism understanding at all. As has been argued in the scholarly literature, this inconsistency contributes greatly to the problem where "the scope of the protection conferred by existing shield laws varies between different Australian jurisdictions" (Lukacs, 2023, p. 74).

Evidence Acts: Activity-based understandings

In 2011, the *Evidence Amendment (Journalists' Privilege) Act 2011* (Cth) came into force, amending the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth). The amendment codified the journalist privilege of source

protection, known in common law as the newspaper rule (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 5; Rolph et al., 2022, p. 539). The statutory form of the privilege means that (subject to a qualification described below) a journalist is not "compellable to answer any question or produce any document that would disclose the identity of the informant or enable that identity to be ascertained" (*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) s 126K(1)). The amendment also introduced the Act's definition of journalist. The Member of Parliament who introduced the Bill, the independent Andrew Wilkie, was explicit that the definition was deliberately drafted to be broad:

> The amendments broaden the definition of a journalist from the traditional, where someone works for a newspaper, radio, television station or newswire, to include those who work in what we call the new media – for example, those who blog, Tweet or who use Facebook or YouTube to publish news […] Ultimately, the definition of a journalist as somebody who is engaged and active in the publication of news will direct the protection to those who genuinely deserve and require it. If uncertainty arises, the courts can be trusted to adjudicate (Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates,* House of Representatives, 21 March 2011, 2393-2394 (Andrew Wilkie)).

The Commonwealth and ACT Evidence Acts share a definition. They both define journalist as "a person who is engaged and active in the publication of news and who may be given information by an informant in the expectation that the information may be published in a news medium." (*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) s 126J (1); *Evidence Act 2011* (ACT) s 126J). The focus in these Acts is on the process of news production. There is no mention of profession or employment in the definition. As signalled by Andrew Wilkie, youtubers should receive journalists' protections under both Commonwealth and ACT Evidence Acts.

The Queensland, Northern Territory, and Victoria evidence statutes each have their own unique definitions of journalist. The definition in the Queensland Act is very clear in its focus on activities and offers more details than the Commonwealth and ACT Acts. In the Act, a:

> person is a journalist if the person is engaged and active in – (a) gathering and assessing information about matters of public interest; and (b) preparing the information, or providing comment or opinion on or analysis of the information, for publication in a news medium (*Evidence Act 1977* (QLD) s 14R(1)).

The definition is detailed and clear in its focus on journalism activities and processes, as opposed to focussing on employment or professional status. The Act also includes matters that a court may take into consideration when determining whether or not someone is a journalist. These considerations include whether the person is "regularly engaged and active" in the activities outlined in the definition, and "whether the person complies with a recognised professional standard or code of practice" (*Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) s 14R(2)).

Lukacs argued, and I agree, that the journalist definition in the *Queensland Evidence Act* is "stronger than those provided by other jurisdictions" (Lukacs, 2023, p. 68) because it provides a "functional" definition of journalism that is based on processes or actions of a person "rather than on their employment status or organisational link" (Lukacs, 2023, pp. 74–75). Lukacs argued that a way forward for shield law in Australia is for all jurisdictions to adopt the positive, or "strong", elements of the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld), such as its definition of journalist (Lukacs, 2023, p. 68).

Regularity is a significant inclusion as it excludes one-off or ad hoc instances of work that would otherwise be considered journalism. The word "complies" is also worth noting. The wording of

the Act allows for someone to fit the understanding of journalism if their actions comply with recognised professional standards of codes of practice. There is no requirement that the person is a member of a particular industry body such as the Media Arts & Entertainment Alliance (MEAA) or the Australian Press Council (APC). Compliance is a higher bar than membership as it can be determined by assessing the person's actions.

The Victorian Act begins with a focus on person but includes factors that the court "must" consider; accordingly, I categorised this Act's understanding as activity based. The definition of journalist in the *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) prescribes that "journalist means a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the publication of information, comment, opinion or analysis in a news medium" (*Evidence Act 2008* (VIC), s 126J(1)). It then goes on to discuss, in detail, considerations that the court must make in determining whether a person is a journalist. Unlike the Queensland Act, which uses "may", the Victorian Act uses "must". Specifically, Victorian courts must consider an activity-based, not a person-based, understanding of journalism. The court must consider whether "a significant proportion" of the person in question's activities include "the practice of collecting and preparing information having the character of news or current affairs; or (ii) commenting or providing opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs for dissemination in a news medium" (Evidence Act 2008 (Vic) s 126J(2)(a)(i-ii)). The court must also consider how regularly a person publishes newsworthy information, or analysis, comment or opinion of news (s 126J(2)(b), as well as whether or not the person is "accountable to comply (through a complaints process) with a recognised journalistic or media professional standards or codes of practice" (s 126J(2)(d)).

This statute specifies the publication of information in a news medium, but, like the Queensland Act, it goes further to include comment, opinion or analysis (*Evidence Act 2008* (VIC), s 126J(1)).

The inclusion of comment, opinion, and analysis broadens the idea of journalism compared to definitions that restrict journalist or journalism to the provision of news or information. However, this Act's inclusion of "profession and occupation" narrows the understanding of journalism to such a degree that as Lukacs suggested, it "may not properly accommodate all journalists operating in the 'modern media environment', leaving their sources unprotected" (Lukacs, 2023, p. 74).

The terms profession and occupation narrow the understanding of journalist and exclude unpaid people and non-professionals. However, there is still a matter of interpretation when it comes to someone being in the profession or occupation of journalism. In the contemporary media environment professional journalism is increasingly precarious and fragmented (Zion et al., 2022, p. 109). Research into the professional field of journalism has shown that "a binary approach to categorising participants as having either stayed in or left journalism would prove inadequate for understanding the kinds of changes that they experienced in their work arrangements" (Zion, 2022, p. 20). This reality of the news media industry makes it increasingly hard to identify journalists based on concepts of profession or professional. In fact, scholars such as Witschge et al. have gone so far as to "challenge journalism scholars to abandon the bulk of their core concepts" at the core of which lies the dichotomy of journalism profession versus non-professionals (2019, p. 654).

The requirement of profession or occupation does not automatically exclude someone who only publishes on a digital platform such as YouTube. YouTube creators such as Michael West, John Cadogan and Phil Edwards, are all former journalist employees of major news organisations who now operate independently. They are paid for their journalism content on YouTube, and they

consider themselves to be professionals. For this Act, courts may have to interpret what profession and occupation means when considering the meaning of journalist.

The Northern Territory's Evidence Act is different again. The Act defines journalist as a person who "obtains new or noteworthy information about matters of public interest; and deals with the information by: preparing the information for a news medium; or providing comment, opinion or analysis of the information for a news medium." (*Evidence (National Uniform Legislation Act 2011* (NT) s 127A(6)). This definition is clearly focused on what a person does, rather than who the person is. Like the Queensland Act, but unlike the Victorian Act, this definition includes the concept of public interest.

Information about matters of public interest is a higher bar than "information having the character of news or current affairs" (*Evidence Act 2008* (Vic)). Explanatory notes for Bills that introduced shield law provisions in both the Queensland and Northern Territory Evidence Acts made clear that "matters of public interest" refers to topics of societal importance that the public should be informed on, and not merely topics that are popular or of interest to the public (Explanatory Memorandum, Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017 (NT); Explanatory Notes, Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (Qld)). The Northern Territory Explanatory Memorandum could not be clearer on this point when it says, "The term 'public interest' refers to information which could assist and improve society and the wellbeing of its members, as opposed to information which the public may simply find interesting (for example, because it is salacious)" (Explanatory Memorandum, Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017 (NT), p. 2).

Compared to the phrase "matters of public interest", the Victorian Evidence Act's phrase "information having the character of news or current affairs" is extremely vague and broad. Greste argued that words such as "character" are problematic as they create the possibility of "elevating all sorts of spoof YouTube or TikTok 'news' channels to the status of 'journalism'" where content can be created "to have the 'character' of journalism but that clearly is not" (Greste, 2023, p. 30). With the inclusion of "new or noteworthy" and "matters of public interest", the understanding of journalism in the Northern Territory Evidence Act is much less vague. With all that being said, these terms and phrases are yet to be tested in court.

While the Commonwealth, ACT, Queensland, Victorian and NT Evidence Acts are activity-based, they still understand journalism differently from each other. The one major point of difference is that the Victorian Act requires employment. Also, the Queensland and Northern Territory Evidence Acts include the idea of public interest in their understanding of journalism, while the others do not. Activities that are explicitly mentioned in the legislation include obtaining "new or noteworthy information" (*Evidence Act 2011* (NT) s 127A(6)(a)), "gathering and assessing information" (*Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) s 14R(1)(b)), and "collecting and information" (*Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) s 126J(2)(a)(i)).

The inclusion of comment and opinion is another significant element of the definitions in the Victorian, Queensland and Northern Territory Acts and one that sets them apart from the Commonwealth and ACT Acts that do not have either of those elements. The inclusion of opinion and comment means that a greater number of youtubers are likely to come within the definition.

Evidence Acts: Person-based understandings

The Evidence Acts of New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia share a definition of "journalist" that stands in contrast to the definitions of other jurisdictions. The definition in these Acts focus is on "person" while the others have an activity-based understanding of journalism. These Acts define journalist as "a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a news medium" (*Evidence Act 1995* (NSW), s 126J). These Acts require the publication of information, though unlike other journalist definitions, the publication of commentary, opinion, and analysis are not included, thus significantly narrowing this understanding of journalism.

Based on the definition of journalist, these Acts have been assessed to have a person-based understanding of journalism. The definition has a clear focus on a person and their profession or occupation status. The requirement of profession or occupation stands in contrast with other Evidence Acts such as the Commonwealth and ACT Evidence Acts and as such, this understanding is narrow, allowing no room for unpaid, or non-professional, people who engage in the publication of information.

The focus is firmly on the person, and not on the activities that go into producing journalism content. Moreover, the person in the profession or occupation of journalism needs only a "connection" to the publishing of news. Unlike the Commonwealth, ACT, Queensland, Northern Territory, and Victoria Evidence Acts, there are no explicit journalism activities that the person is supposed to undertake.

Court Interpretation of "journalist" in Evidence Acts

Very few Australian courts, in any area of law, have considered the definition of journalism-related terms, such as journalist, at length. One exception is the discussion by Flick J of "journalist" in the Commonwealth Evidence Act in *Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753 (*Kumova v Davison*). Flick J also considered definitions from other Evidence Acts, with a particular focus on the definition in the *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic). This is a rare discussion by the courts as to what constitutes journalism.

This judgment was part of a larger substantive defamation proceeding where the applicant, Mr Kumova, sought damages from the respondent, Mr Davison. Kumova claimed a number of tweets on Davison's Twitter account, @stockswami, defamed him (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 6). Defences put forward included justification and contextual truth. Davison sought to keep secret the identity of his confidential informant by appealing to the journalism privilege of informant protection in section 126K of the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth).

A key issue in Flick J's judgment is how the term journalist should be understood. In this judgment, His Honour said that "there remains much uncertainty as to who falls within the common understanding of 'journalist'", however, he concluded that, at least in regard to the Commonwealth *Evidence Act*, a journalist does "not need to be formally engaged in a profession or business as a 'journalist'", nor do they need to be paid for what they publish (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 11). In his interpretation of the journalist definition in the *Commonwealth Evidence Act*, Flick J noted that the understanding of journalist is tied to an informant (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 11). In other words, this narrow definition does not include

conceptualisations of journalist that do not involve an informant (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 11).

The understanding of journalist in the Commonwealth Evidence Act goes beyond the definition in s 126J, with Flick J writing that other factors may be considered when determining whether someone is a journalist. His Honour pointed to the factors that are made explicit in the *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) which he said, "may be seen as doing nothing more than giving express content to what otherwise may be seen as necessarily to be implied or inferred" in the Commonwealth's understanding of journalist (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 12). However, unlike with the *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic), consideration of such factors is optional when considering journalist in the Commonwealth Act.

Factors that Flick J mentioned that are important to this understanding of journalism include fairness and motives. He also made clear that a journalist should publish work that is fair and balanced with the purpose of conveying news (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 12). In the case before the court, the self-described purpose of the person whose journalist status was in question was considered to be at "the very heart of the conclusion" that he was not a journalist (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13). The main source used to determine this was the person's Twitter account profile information as the case concerned allegedly defamatory matter in several of the respondent's tweets (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 7). In his own Twitter "profile header" the respondent claimed that, rather than being used for journalism purposes, the "account is a platform for providing a 'Cynical and Cranky take on the ASX professional company manipulators'" (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13).

Regularity of news publication is also an important theme that emerges in this judgment. Flick J makes special mention of the phrase "engaged and active" in the s 126J definition, stating that it "further reinforces a construction of the term 'journalist' as not referring to someone who only and coincidentally publishes material which may otherwise be characterised as 'news'" (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13).

In addition to regularity, the Commonwealth Act's understanding of journalist includes the requirement that news content is published in a news medium. Flick J explains that the news medium "must remain a medium which is routinely or regularly used by journalists as a medium primarily, or at least substantially, for the publication of 'news' as opposed to a medium which may from time to time be the source of 'news'" (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 16). In *Kumova v Davison*, the place of publication was the Twitter account of the person in question. An assessment by the court of the content on the Twitter account found that much of the material there could not be described as news. This, in addition to the accounts self-description, convinced His Honour that the Twitter account was not a news medium (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 17).

It is worth noting that the judgment of *Kumova v Davison* was handed down before the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) was amended in 2022 to include its current definition of journalist. As the current definition in that Act was not considered by Flick J, the case only adds to the uncertainty regarding future interpretations of journalist in the Commonwealth *Evidence Act*.

Other Acts with shield law provisions and whistleblower protections

It is clear from the above discussion that there is no agreement in the Evidence Acts about how a journalist should be understood, and by extension who should receive the journalist privilege. A number of other statutes also include shield law provisions or whistleblower protections, further highlighting just how inconsistent and even contradictory this one area of law is regarding journalism. Other Acts which include a shield law provision is the Broadcasting Services Act and the Privacy Act, both of which are discussed below (see 3.5.3 & 3.5.5).

In the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), there are provisions that allow for whistleblower protection for public interest disclosures and emergency disclosures (s 1317AAD). In these provisions, a disclosure that qualifies for protection can be made to a journalist (s 1317AAD(1)(f)(ii); s 1317AAD(2)(d)(ii)). Journalist is defined in the Act differently to any of the Evidence Act definitions. In the *Corporations Act*, a journalist is:

> a person who is working in a professional capacity as a journalist for any of the following: (a) a newspaper or magazine; (b) a radio or television broadcast service; (c) an electronic service (including a service provided through the internet) that: (i) is operated on a commercial basis, or operated by a body that provides a national broadcasting service (within the meaning of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*); and (ii) is similar to a newspaper, magazine or radio or television broadcast (*Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), s 1317AAD(3)).

Here the focus is on the person and their employment status. Themes present are being part of a profession, engaging in business, and being in an occupation.

Public Interest Disclosure Acts are in place to "encourage and facilitate disclosure of improper conduct by public officers, public bodies and other persons" and to allow for the protection of whistleblowers (*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (ACT) s 1(a-b)). These Acts allow for whistleblowers to make public interest disclosures to journalists. Disclosure cannot be done by any means, and disclosed information cannot be given to just anyone. One way this disclosure can occur is through passing information to a journalist. Here a journalist plays a specific role: that of a valid recipient of confidential information from public officials.

The inconsistency of the law is revealed by the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (ACT), the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (SA), the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022* (NSW) and the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (WA). In these four jurisdictions, there are two different definitions and one Act without a definition.

Nonetheless, each of these four Acts has a person-based understanding. The South Australian and NSW Acts contain the same person-based, somewhat circular definition of journalism as the NSW, SA, and WA Evidence Acts where a "journalist means a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a news medium" (s 4). The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (WA) is similar, though it is worded in a way that makes it a unique definition where journalist is "a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a medium for the dissemination to the public or a section of the public of news and observations on news" (s 7A (1)). And the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (ACT) does not contain a journalism-related definition at all.

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (Qld) also contains provision for individuals working in the public service to make public interest disclosures of information (s 3; s 20). This Act has a definition for journalist which is "a person engaged in the occupation of writing or editing material intended for publication in the print or electronic news media" (s 4 (1); s 20 (4)). This definition is narrow as it explicitly links journalist to employment. By contrast, the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (Vic) has no reference to any journalism-related terms at all.

Unsurprisingly, this analysis also reveals that Australia's Public Interest Disclosure Acts have vastly different themes. The ACT and Victorian Acts have no journalism-related terms, and hence no themes. In Queensland, the theme is being in an occupation; however, the definition doesn't quite qualify for the theme of informing the public, given writing or editing "material" is too vague. Meanwhile, themes I have identified in the NSW, SA and WA Acts include informing the public, being part of a profession, being in an occupation and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023 (Cth) also has a shield law provision whereby a journalist is not required to comply with an order from an investigating Commissioner to give information, produce documents, or answer question if:

> the journalist reasonably believes that the informant has provided the information on the express or implied understanding that the informant's identity would not be disclosed; and (c) compliance with the requirement would disclose the identity of the informant or enable that identity to be ascertained (s 24FA(3)(a-c)).

This Act does not have a definition for journalist.

Shield laws: a summary

Shield law provisions are a clear example of the lack of consensus about understandings of journalism in the law. Australia's Evidence Acts involve five contrasting definitions, some of them activity-based and some of them person-based. Some include opinion, some require regular output, and some mandate professional ethics. Others do not. The Evidence Acts demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of journalism understandings in the law. However, evidently there is a clear lack of consensus in Australian Evidence Acts about the nature of journalism.

Australian Evidence Acts contain a number of key journalism-related themes. However, not all themes are present in each Evidence Act. The Victorian, NSW, WA, and SA Evidence Acts include the theme of being part of a profession, while the remaining Acts do not. The Northern Territory and Queensland Evidence Acts include the theme of informing the public about public interest issues, while the other Acts include the theme of informing the public. The Victorian, Queensland, and Northern Territory Acts include the theme of contributing to public sphere discussions, while this theme is absent in the other Acts. Ethical considerations and regularity of publication are two more key themes that emerge. These themes are found in the Queensland and Victorian statutes, and in Commonwealth shield law via Flick J's interpretation of journalist in *Kumova v Davison*. As it happens, journalism-related themes are just as incoherent and inconsistent in other areas of law.

3.5.3 Broadcasting services

In Australia, there is an important distinction between broadcast media and print media: the former comes under the Commonwealth's communications power in s 51(v) of the Constitution;

the latter (mostly) does not (*Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*). One manifestation of this difference is that most broadcasting services require a licence, whereas newspapers do not. This partly explains the incoherence of the legislation and regulation covering media and journalism in Australia, and also the legislation and regulation's difficulty in adapting to cover digital services.

The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) (BSA) is the main piece of legislation that deals specifically with media in Australia. Among other things, it establishes the categories of broadcasting services that will be licensed to operate in Australia, and it provides the framework for imposing content requirements on these services, whether through provisions in the Act itself or through rules established by the regulator, the ACMA, or by industry associations. The BSA also imposes some obligations on online streaming services. The Act contains several journalism-related definitions. The different understandings of journalism in this Act are not connected to each other and appear in different provisions. The Act contains two content-based definitions, "local news program" and "news or current affairs", and one activity-based definition of "journalist".

The BSA includes a shield law provision which gives journalists "a reasonable excuse for a person to refuse to answer a question or to produce a document" if answering the question or producing the document risks disclosing the identity of a confidential witness (s 202(4)). This provision of the Act gives a definition of journalist which is "a person engaged in the profession or practice of reporting for, photographing, editing, recording or making (a) television or radio programs; or datacasting content; of a news, current affairs, information or documentary character" (*Broadcast Services Act 1992* (Cth) s 202(5)). This definition mentions profession, however, unlike other Acts that mention profession, here it is not the sole way to qualify as a journalist. This Act includes "or practice". As such, it appears that an unpaid, amateur media

professional could be included in this definition if they engage in the activities mentioned in the definition.

The understanding here is activity-based as the specific activities required to satisfy the definition include reporting, photographing, editing, recording, and making. The focus is not restricted to a person's status, the status of an organisation, nor is the focus on media content. This is the definition from the BSA that Ananian-Welsh also included in her category of activity-based approaches (2022, p. 466). The two major themes that emerge from this understanding of journalism are profession and informing the public.

Local news requirements

The Act contains two content-based definitions of journalism related terms. The first, which arises in the context of regulatory arrangements that ensure audiences in regional areas have access to some local television news, is "local news program". This term is given a circular definition in the Act:

> (a) a program that consists solely of local news and/or local weather information; or (b) a program: (i) that consists primarily of local news and/or local weather information; and (ii) the remainder of which consists of other news and/or other weather information; but does not include: (c) a short segment, or a headline update, that is broadcast for the sole or primary purpose of promoting another program; or (d) a short segment, or a headline update, that repeats news content that has previously been broadcast by the licensee concerned (*Broadcast Services Act 1992* (Cth) Part 4, Division 3,s 43AA(7)).

Other than being focused on content, this definition provides little in terms of an understanding of journalism.

Additionally, there are subsidiary legislative instruments that set out licensing conditions for regional television and radio broadcasters. Relevant legislative instruments include:

- Broadcasting Services Local Programming Determination 2018
- Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Local Presence) Licence Condition 2024
- Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Material of Local Significance) Licence Condition 2024

The Broadcasting Services Local Programming Determination 2018 and the Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Local Presence) Licence Condition 2024 set the requirements for minimum amounts of local news to be broadcasted by licensees. However, other than requiring the news to "relate directly to the local area" there is no great insight into the meaning of news or journalism (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2018a, s 9(a), 2024a, 6(1)(a)).

In contrast, the Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Material of Local Significance) Licence Condition 2024 gives insight into what constitute news. This instrument deals with the meaning of "material of local significance". The section most relevant to this thesis is that which states that material is of local significance if it "relates to the licence area of the regional commercial radio broadcasting licence" (Australian Communications and Media Authority [ACMA], 2024b s 8(2)(c)). The instrument then goes on to give a definition for "relates to the licence area":

> (3) Material relates to the licence area if it relates to any of the following matters: (a) an economic issue as it affects the licence area; (b) a government or political issue as it affects the licence area; (c) a social issue as it affects the licence area; (d) an education issue as it affects the licence area; (e) a health issue as it affects the licence area; (f) an employment issue as it affects the licence area; (g) an event in the licence area, including an event that has not yet occurred; (h) a person or organisation associated with the licence area; (i) the views of a person or organisation associated with the licence area; (j) weather conditions in the licence area; (k) a cultural interest, or an issue relating to culture, as it affects the licence area; (l) the natural or built environment in the licence area; (m) a body, operating in the licence area, that deals with community, welfare, religious, educational or other community service; (n) an emergency warning broadcast at the request of an emergency service agency. (4) Material of any kind that is not described in subsection (3) relates to the licence area if a direct and substantial relationship between the material and the licence area exists (ACMA, 2024b s 9(3-4)).

This list of matters is helpfully comprehensive and could uncontroversially form part of a definition of public interest issues.

The second content-based definition is "news or current affairs program" which appears in three separate sections of the Act that deal with captioning, digital television broadcasting, and datacasting services. In the Act, news or current affairs program is defined as:

> any of the following: (a) a news bulletin; (b) a sports news bulletin; (c) a program (whether presenter-based or not) whose sole or dominant purpose is to provide analysis, commentary or discussion principally designed to inform the general community about social, economic or political issues of current relevance to the general community (*Broadcast Services Act 1992* (Cth) Schedule 4, Part 1, s 2).

In this understanding of journalism, the themes are informing the public and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

The ACMA

My analysis of journalism understandings in the BSA led me to the ACMA. Here I unpack the ACMA and its importance in detail. In the Act that created the ACMA, the agency is given the specific functions "to assist broadcasting service providers and datacasting service providers to develop codes of practice that, as far as possible, are in accordance with community standards" and "to monitor compliance with those codes of practice" (*Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* (Cth) s 10(1)(i-j)). This monitoring power by AMCA is reinforced in the BSA where the ACMA is given "the responsibility for monitoring the broadcasting industry, the datacasting industry, the internet industry, the commercial content service industry and the online content services industry" (*Broadcast Services Act 1992* (Cth) Part 1, s 5(1)), with breaches of the code determined by the ACMA under the BSA, not the ACMA Act. Monitoring is done via ACMA investigations into complaints against licensees where the requirements of registered codes of practice are applied to the facts of the complaints.

The codes of conduct provide insight into how journalism should be understood in this area of law. However, my analysis of the codes reveals that there are significant inconsistencies among them. Within the 11 codes of conduct, eight journalism-related themes were identified, and no single code included all of the themes (Appendix F). Despite this, dominant journalism themes can be identified. Of the themes identified, only accuracy was found in every code (Figure 4). Fairness was the next most common theme, occurring in ten of the 11 codes. Ethical considerations was found in seven codes and distinguishing factual material from other types of

content appeared in eight of the codes. Impartiality was found in half of the codes while privacy and diverse perspectives were found in fewer than half.

The most substantial and impactful area of the BSA that gives insight into journalism and related terms is that which allows the system of media co-regulation where media organisations are required to abide by codes of practice which are developed by industry and then registered with, and enforced by, the ACMA. Under section 149 of the BSA, the ACMA has the power to investigate complaints made about broadcasters where they are accused of breaching the relevant code. In doing so, the ACMA often makes determinations about the nature of journalism-related terms such as news and current affairs. In 2018, the ACMA released a series of reports that delved into key concepts that are of particular focus in ACMA investigations. These key concepts align with the themes identified in my content analysis of ACMA investigations (Figure 5). They include accuracy, minimisation of harm, fairness and impartiality (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d).

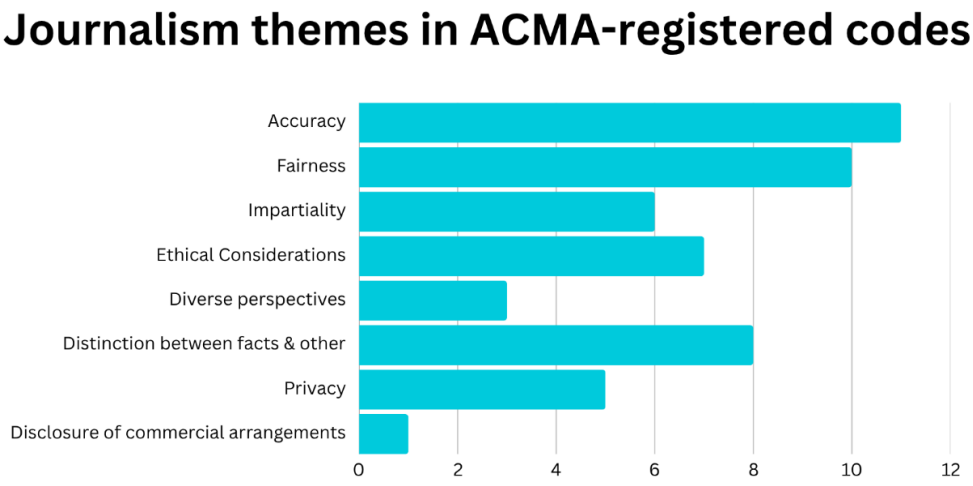

Figure 4. Frequency of journalism themes in 11 ACMA registered codes of conduct.

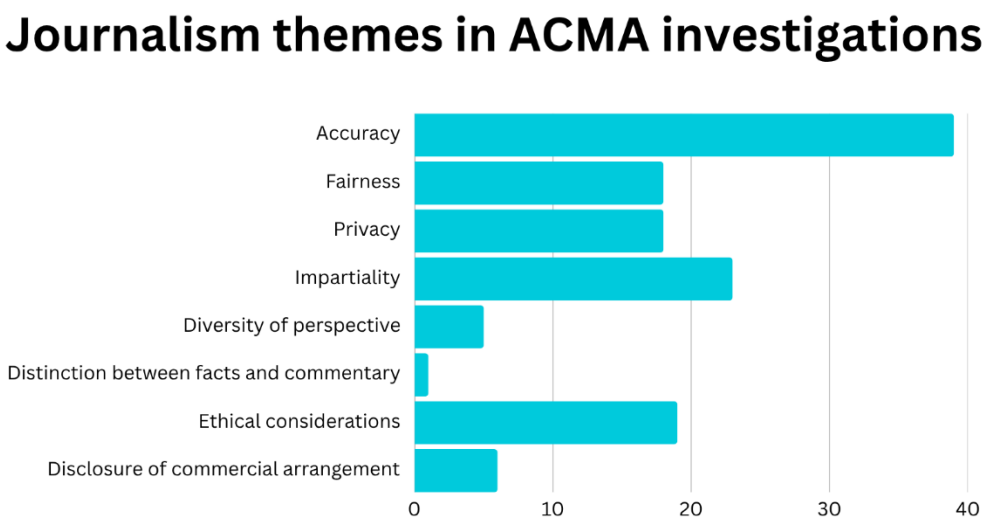

Figure 5. Frequency of journalism themes in finalised ACMA investigations.

There are additional complexities that impede a clear understanding of journalism being drawn from the codes, and therefore from the BSA. These complexities involve the journalism-related terms used. Most of the codes use the terms "news" and "current affairs", while the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice (2025, p. 14) does not contain current affairs and instead uses the phrases "news content" and "journalistic content". In some codes, "news and current affairs" is considered as a singular concept. For example, the Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice (2013, p. 15) includes a definition where "news and current affairs programs means programs which report on current or recent happening and include short bulletins, filmed coverage of international, national and local events, report on weather and essential services". Conversely, the Commercial Radio Code of Practice (2017) separates current affairs programs from news programs:

- Current Affairs Program means a Program the predominant purpose of which is to provide interviews, analysis, commentary or discussion, including open-line discussion with listeners, about current social, economic or political issues (p. 23).
- News Program means a Program, bulletin or news flash, the predominant purpose of which is to present factual new information on current events and which is typically prepared by journalists (p. 24).

Further, two of the codes, the Commercial Radio Code of Practice (2017, s 3.9) and the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (2015, s 1.4.3) explicitly state that current affairs programs do not need to be impartial. Contradicting this is the Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice (2013, s 2.2(a)) which requires current affairs programs to be impartial. As these results show, even in the narrow scope of codes of conduct registered with the ACMA under the BSA, the law's understanding of journalism is inconsistent.

These inconsistencies, like those in other areas of law, sends mixed signals to the public and media producers about what constitutes journalism and what is covered by the law. This confusion is exacerbated by the BCA's inclusion of the term "current affairs", especially as it is defined in multiple different ways.

In addition to analysing the codes, I also reviewed 288 finalised ACMA investigations in order to identify journalism themes that were valued by the ACMA. From this analysis eight journalism themes were identified (Figure 5). The most frequent was accuracy, which occurred 39 times. This was followed by impartiality (28), fairness (18), privacy (18) and minimising harm (12). The remaining themes that emerged were perspective diversity (5),

disclosure of commercial arrangement (6), and distinguishing factual material from commentary and analysis (1) (Appendix E).

The ACMA has the power to determine program standards where codes of practice are "not operating to provide appropriate community safeguards" or "where no code of practice registered" (BSA s 125 (1)(a), (2)(a)). Examples of where it has applied these standards following investigations into complaints of code breaches include BI-678 and BI-680 (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2024c). In these investigations, broadcasters were found to have breached sections of the Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Current Affairs Disclosure) Standard 2022 that require on-air disclosure when broadcasting editorial material that concerns a sponsor (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2022 s 10). This standard reinforces the principle of editorial independence as it exists in the definition of journalism proposed in this thesis where "editorially independent means that the media creator has no direct personal interest, financial or otherwise, in the matters being reported on" (see 2.4). If there is a commercial or financial interest, then the broadcast or publication is quite likely to be either advertising or paid propaganda. Whatever it is, it is not journalism as this thesis understands it.

The identified themes are occasionally made explicit in the analysed reports. For example, the ACMA prescribes what it means for news to be impartial:

> The impartiality requirement means that news must be presented in such a way that one side of an issue is not unduly favoured over another, and that the program does not show prejudice or bias against a particular side (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2018e, p. 6).

Public broadcasters have codes formulated under their own separate Acts and which are not subject to the same enforcement powers as broadcasters licensed under the BSA. Interestingly, when it comes to impartiality, they can be treated differently from commercial media organisations:

> A broadcaster operating under statute with public funds is legitimately expected to contribute in ways that may differ from commercial media, which are free to be partial to private interests (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021d, p. 35).

Commercial radio and television broadcasters are only required to be impartial in relation to news programs, and they are explicitly allowed to be partial in the broadcast of current affairs programs (Free TV Australia, 2015, p 10; Commercial Radio Australia, 2017, p. 6). This freedom to be partial for commercial broadcasters has implications for the assessment of youtubers later in this chapter as bias and impartiality in media content is a live issue – for old and new media (Oprea, 2023; Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2024). In Chapters 5 and 7 I will look further at how values such as fairness, impartiality and accuracy form part of the work of youtubers.

3.5.4 Criminal law

Criminal law, at the state and federal level, has numerous journalism understandings. These understandings, often undefined, are in place to give journalists special exemptions and defences for specific offences. People found guilty of such offences often face serious penalties including significant time in prison. While journalists are afforded exemptions and defences, inconsistent journalism understandings in criminal law place a heavy burden on media practitioners, especially youtubers, who are not employed as journalists at major news organisations, with legal support and, where their actions and publications may constitute protected journalism in some cases but

be unprotected in others. This section provides an illustrative selection of the inconsistency of journalism understandings in Australian criminal law.

The *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth), along with the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) deals with criminal law at the federal level. Chapter 5 of the Act establishes a range of offences concerning the security of the Commonwealth, including those relating to terrorism, hate crimes, espionage and revealing secret government information. The Act contains six special defences for journalists and eight special exemptions. The offences that these defences and exemptions relate to are serious and can result in serious prison time. There are seven journalism understandings in the Act, of which three are activity-based, three are content-based, and one is person-based. There is no definition for journalist, journalism, or news; however, there is a definition for "journalistic capacity" which is defined rather unhelpfully as "a capacity as a journalist, editor, producer or other person involved in the process of making news reports or current affairs reports" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth), Dictionary).

The Act is yet another example of the disorderly nature of journalism understandings in Australian law. Even at the most basic level, journalism understandings in the Act differ. They also differ in terms of the journalism themes in each understanding. The presence of an official definition for journalistic capacity does little to clarify the Act's overall understanding of journalism as the definition is circular and the phrase only appears in less than half the sections in the Act that have journalism understandings. Journalistic capacity is only found in s 80.2H(9)(b)(ii), s 80.2HA(9)(b)(ii), s 80.2J(5)(c)(ii), s 80.2JA(5)(c)(ii) and 80.2M(3)(b)(ii).

Division 80 of the Act concerns treason, urging or threatening violence, offences against groups or members of groups, advocating terrorism or genocide, and prohibited symbols. This division alone is a microcosm of the contradictory way in which journalism is understood in Australian law. In this division there is a special defence for "journalistic purposes" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) ss 80.2H, 80.2HA). That term is left undefined; however, these sections share an activity-based understanding of journalism that contains the themes of occupation, profession, and informing the public about public interest issues.

The division also contains special journalist exemptions for the trading of goods that have prohibited Nazi symbols (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 80.2J(5)(c)) or prohibited organisation symbols (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 80.2JA(5)(c)). The journalism understanding here is content-based and contains the themes of occupation, profession, and informing the public about public issues. Adding to the complexity, special defences are available if the actions are a commentary on public affairs and that the commentary is in the public interest (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) ss 80.2J(6), 20.2JA(6)). The journalism understanding for these sections is content-based and contains the theme contributing to public sphere deliberation. Finally, this division contains another special defence to the offence of failing to cease displaying prohibited symbols in public (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 80.2M(3)(b)). Here the base journalism understanding is activity-based, and the themes present are occupation, profession, and informing the public about public interest issues.

Division 119 deals with foreign incursions and recruitment. A journalist exemption is available for journalists who enter or remain in an area in a foreign country if that area is declared by the Foreign Affairs Minister to be an area where "a listed terrorist organisation is engaging in a hostile activity" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 119.2(3) (f); s 119.3(1)). There is a limited number

of ways to qualify for this exemption. One way is if a person is "working in a professional capacity as a journalist" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth), s 119.2(3)(f)). While this is not a definition, it makes clear that to be eligible for this exemption a journalist requires a connection to work and profession. As this understanding of journalism is about journalist with no explicit details on journalism activities or content it fits into the person-focused category. Despite the absence of a definition, the themes of profession and occupation are present.

Division 122 concerns secrecy of information. A special defence for crimes regarding secrecy of information and communication is available to a "person engaged in the business of reporting news, presenting current affairs or expressing editorial or other content in news media" where the person believed their conduct "was in the public interest" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 122.5(6)(a)). This defence does not use the words journalist or journalism, though the above is arguably a de facto definition for a journalist. On one hand, this understanding of journalism remains vague and open to interpretation, especially with the inclusion of "editorial or other content" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 122.5(6)). On the other hand, this understanding is strict as it is limited by the inclusion of a business requirement. No case law has yet interpreted this section. Themes present in this understanding are business, informing the public about public interest issues and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

Another understanding of journalism, Division 474 of the Act, was introduced via the *Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material) Act 2019* (Cth). Passed in the wake of the livestreaming of the Christchurch Massacre, this amendment was introduced in order to "address significant gaps in Australia's current criminal laws by ensuring that persons who are internet service providers, or who provide content or hosting services, take timely action in relation to

abhorrent violent material that can be accessed using their services" (Explanatory Memorandum, Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material) Bill 2019 (Cth), p. 3).

In Division 474 of the Act, journalists have three special journalist defences and two special journalist exemptions. Two defences are in relation to offences concerning the provision of content and hosting services where people can access abhorrent violent material (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 474.37(1)(e); s 474.37(2)(e)). The third defence is in relation to offences related to publishing violent extremist material (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) s 474.45D(1)(e). The two special exemptions are for journalists using a carriage service to incite trespass, theft, or damage on agricultural land (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) ss 474.46(2), 474.47(2)). The defences and exemptions all use the same wording for what type of journalism material qualifies for the exemption or defence. Material qualifies if "the material relates to a news report, or a current affairs report that: (i) is in the public interest; and (ii) is made by someone working in a professional capacity as a journalist" (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) ss 474.37(1)(e); 474.37(2)(e); 474.45D(1)(e); 474.46(2), 474.47(2)). In this journalism understanding, the key themes are informing the public about public interest issues, profession, and occupation.

The *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) also deals with offences against the Commonwealth of Australia. It does not include a definition of journalism or journalist, and unlike the *Criminal Code Act* it does not contain substantial journalist privileges or exemptions. There is, however, an understanding of journalist in the Act. Journalists are only mentioned in one section, in relation to the issuing of online account takeover warrants which enable Federal law enforcement agencies "to take control of an online account and deprive the account holder of access to that account for the purposes of gathering evidence about criminal activity" (Department of Home Affairs, 2024).

When deciding on whether to issue an account takeover warrant of "a person who is working in the professional capacity as a journalist or of an employee of such a person", the court must take into consideration whether the public interest in issuing the warrant outweighs the public interest of protecting the journalist's sources and public interest of the journalist's reporting on matters of public interest (*Crimes Act 1914* (Cth), s 3ZZUP(2)(d)). This understanding is clearly focused on *person* and their employment status, and the themes present are profession and occupation.

The *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) contains no definition of journalism or related terms. It contains no explicit journalist exemption or privilege. It does not even include the word journalist. Yet it has an understanding of journalism in one section containing provisions regarding child abuse material. Decisions by the court as to whether or not a piece of media content is child abuse material can be guided by several considerations (*Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) s 91FB(2)), including "the journalistic merit (if any) of the material, being the merit of the material as a record or report of a matter of public interest" (*Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) s 91FB(2)(c)). The understanding of journalism here is clearly content based, however the exact nature of the content is left unexplained. While it is not elaborated, the theme in this understanding is informing the public about public interest issues.

The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and the *Police Act 2013* (Vic) do not have any special legal exemptions or significant privileges for journalists. Rather, in the Acts, journalists play the role of valid intermediary between the police and the public. The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) allows Victorian police to display items seized under a warrant to journalism-producing media organisations (s 465F(1)(b)) and the *Victoria Police Act* (Vic) 2013 allows Victoria police to give media

organisations photographs of someone who is in custody and who has been found guilty of an offence (s 238(1)).

These Acts share two journalism-related definitions of "media organisation" and "journalism". A media organisation is "a person or body that engages in journalism" (s 235(1)) and journalism:

> means the practice of collecting, preparing for dissemination or disseminating any of the following material for the purpose of making it available to the public – (a) material having the character of news of current affairs; (b) material consisting of commentary or opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs (*Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, s 465F(3)).

The definition of journalism in these Acts focuses on key activities involved in journalism, and it notably does not require professional engagement or occupation which broadens the understanding. This definition is also broad in that journalism material needs only the "character" of news or current affairs. Yet another way this understanding of journalism is broad and inclusive is because it includes material that contains news commentary, opinion, or analysis rather than having a narrower focus on news alone. The key themes in these Acts are informing the public and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

The *Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913* (WA) does not have a definition of journalist or journalism, rather, the term being defined here is "media activity purposes". This is defined as:

> the purposes of collecting, preparing for the distribution of, or distributing – (a) material having the character of news, current affairs or a documentary; or (b) material

> consisting of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs, or a documentary (*Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913* (WA) s 221BD(1)).

This Act provides a defence to the crime of distributing an intimate image of someone without their consent (s 221BD(2)) if the image was distributed for "media activity purposes" (s 221BD(3)(c)(i)) and no harm was intended (s 221BD(3)(c)(ii)), and it was "reasonably believed the distribution to be in the public interest" (s221BD(3)(c)(iii)). The term media activity purposes is unique to this Act, though its definition resembles, among others, the definition for journalism in the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) s 465F(3).

This definition is broad and open to anyone performing the described actions. The focus is on the actions of collecting, distributing, and preparing to distribute. This understanding is also broad regarding the material being collected, distributed, or prepared. This material is that which has the character of news or current affairs or is a documentary. It also includes material that analyses, comments on, or gives opinions on such material. It would appear that a youtuber could easily qualify. The key themes present in this Act are informing the public and contributing to public sphere deliberations.

The *Criminal Procedure Rules 2005* (WA) allows media organisations to apply to inspect or obtain court documents (s 51(2A)(i)), and the *Magistrates' Court (General) Rules 2005* (WA) contains a provision that allows media organisation to apply for access to court documents (s 40B). Both of these pieces of subsidiary legislation contain the same understanding of journalism which is centred on a definition of the term media organisation. While the defined term is media organisation, it is an activity-based understanding of journalism, not an organisation-based understanding. Media organisation is defined as "an organisation that disseminates news or

information to the public through the press or by means of radio, television or the internet" (*Criminal Procedure Rules 2005* (WA) s 51(1A)). The focus is on the action of disseminating, rather than the status or nature of the organisation. The key theme here is informing the public.

The *Summary Offences Act 1953* (SA) includes provisions for offences against public order and other summary offences. It also includes provisions for police investigation powers. In this Act there is an offence of distributing humiliating or degrading images or video without the consent of the victim (s 26B(2)(a-b)). A defence to this is available to media organisations. This defence can apply if the distribution of the non-consensual humiliating or degrading images or video was done for legitimate public purposes (s 26B(7)). The legitimate public purpose relevant to media organisations is when the distribution is for "educating or informing the public" (*Summary Offences Act 1953* (SA) s 26B(6)(a)).

The Act defines media organisation as:

> an organisation that engages in broadcasting pursuant to a licence under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* of the Commonwealth or that is otherwise authorised under a law of the Commonwealth to engage in broadcasting; or (b) an organisation that is a constituent body of the Australian Press Council or is authorised under a law of the Commonwealth to engage in publishing (*Summary Offences Act 1953* (SA) s 26B(9)).

This definition is firmly centred on organisation, and it lacks any substantive detail on journalism activities or content. It is also strict in its requirements for qualifying organisations. The theme in this Act's understanding of journalism is ethical considerations.

3.5.5 Privacy

Conducting journalism involves reporting stories and, on occasion, divulging information which is private. This requires journalists to balance privacy interests against the public interest. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) exists to protect the privacy of individuals, and for related purposes (s 2A(a)). The Act deals with the use of personal information and sensitive information, and the objectives of the Act include first and foremost the protection of individuals' privacy (s 2A(a)). This Act includes five separate and distinct understandings of journalism. Two are person-based, one is organisation-based, one is activity-based, and one is content-based. Privacy law shows the omnivorous approach of the Australian law to journalism understandings. The *Privacy Act* alone contains all four base types of journalism understandings identified in this chapter: person-based; organisation-based; activity-based; and content-based.

The first of the person-based understandings is connected to the offence of failing to give information to the court (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 66(1)). In what amounts to a shield law provision, journalists are excused from this offence of failing to give information if "giving the information, answering the question or producing the document or record would tend to reveal the identity of a person who gave information or a document or record to the journalist in confidence" (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), s66(1A)). This part of the Act includes no definition of journalist, and this provision gives no indication of the nature of journalism actions or content.

The second person-based journalism understanding in the Act was introduced by the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (Cth). This Bill introduced a new statutory tort that created "liability for misuse of private information or intrusion upon seclusion or both" (Rolph et al., 2022, p. 20). Included in the new provisions is an exemption for journalists which means

journalists or professionals who assist them, can't be sued under the new statutory tort for invading privacy (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 15(1)). Australia was the last comparable jurisdiction to introduce such a tort, and it is the only one with such an exemption.

To aid in determining who qualifies for the journalist exemption a new and unique, person-based definition was introduced into the Act, one that applies only to Schedule 2, where a journalist is:

> a person who: (a) works in a professional capacity as a journalist; and (b) is subject to: (i) standards of professional conduct that apply to journalists; or (ii) a code of practice that applies to journalists (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 15(2)).

This somewhat circular definition makes clear that professionalism, occupation and ethical considerations are key.

Schedule 2 also contains a content-based journalism definition for "journalistic material" which is defined as material that:

> has the character of news, current affairs or a documentary; (b) or consists of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs or a documentary; or (c) consists of editorial content relating to news, current affairs or a documentary (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 15(3)).

The definitions of journalist and journalistic material are relevant to the same journalist exemption to the invasion of privacy in Part 3 of Schedule 2.

In another, separate part of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), Section 7B(4) gives media organisations special exemptions under the Act for their acts or practices if they are done in the course of

journalism and are "publicly committed to observe standards" that deal with privacy. The section starts with the heading "Journalism" however, in this section there is no definition of journalism. Rather, the section says journalism is:

> An act done, or practice engaged in, by a media organisation is exempt for the purposes of paragraph 7(1)(ee) if the act is done, or the practice is engaged in: (a) by the organisation in the course of journalism; and (b) at a time when the organisation is publicly committed to observe standards that: (i) deal with privacy in the context of the activities of a media organisation (whether or not the standards also deal with other matters); and (ii) have been published in writing by the organisation or a person or body representing a class of media organisations (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 7B(4)).

The understanding of journalism here has media organisation at its core, and key words and phrases such as "act", "practice", and "in the course of journalism" are not elaborated on. A big focus of this section is on requiring a media organisation to publicly observe privacy standards. The theme present here is having ethical considerations.

While journalism is not defined, media organisation is. Moreover, the only section that the definition of media organisation applies to is 7B(4). For this section:

> media organisation means an organisation whose activities consist of or include the collection, preparation for dissemination or dissemination of the following material for the purpose of making it available to the public: (a) material having the character of news, current affairs, information or a documentary; (b) material consisting of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs, information or a documentary (*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 6(1)).

At the core of this definition are the specific activities of collection, preparing, and disseminating. This understanding includes the themes of informing the public and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

3.5.6 Defamation: Public interest publications without journalism-related terms

Defamation is an area of law that frequently concerns journalists; indeed, the relationship between defamation and the press has been a longstanding point of discussion. In the early 19th century James Mill (father of John Stuart Mill) and Jeremy Bentham wrote that the "real tyranny of the press" occurs when writings are not published due to "the threat of a potentially ruinous [libel] trial" (Grint, 2017, pp. 367–368). This chilling effect of defamation actions is still a major matter of concern in the 21st century. The interview-based study by Kenyon and Marjoribanks (2008, p. 19) is part of a large body of literature that has found that Australian defamation law "has chilled journalism about political and business matters."

Defamation law seeks to balance the competing interests of freedom of expression and the right to reputation (Rolph et al., 2022, p. 224). In defamation law a person can bring an action against someone else in order to protect their reputation, which may have been damaged by the publication of content in the media or elsewhere. Although the cause of action arises out of the law of tort, each state and territory in Australia has its own statutory scheme that establishes certain procedural aspects for a defamation action and provides complementary (and additional) defences to those at common law. Defamation is a major area of relevant law for journalism, both because of the financial burden of defending a defamation action and the damages that can be awarded. However, the terms journalist and journalism are conspicuously absent from

defamation statutes. The terms are also not found in the explanatory notes for defamation amendment bills that, in 2020, introduced a public interest defence.

It could be argued that public interest journalism is alluded to in section 3, which prescribes the objects for each of the defamation statutes. The *Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) is an exemplar, where one of the four objects of the Act is to "ensure that the law of defamation does not place unreasonable limits on freedom of expression and, in particular, on the publication and discussion of matters of public interest and importance" (s 3(b)). It is also made clear in the explanatory note for the Defamation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW) that the public interest defence is "aimed at promoting that object" (Explanatory Note, Defamation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW), p. 10). The importance placed on publications of matters of public interest certainly aligns with the journalism democratic function of informing the public about public interest issues.

The push to unify defamation law across Australia resulted in remarkable uniformity with each of the states and territories enacting Defamation Acts in 2005 to bring consistency across the various jurisdictions. Two exceptions are the ACT and Western Australian Acts. In the ACT, rather than creating a new Act, the *Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002* (ACT) was amended to insert the relevant provisions to bring it in line with uniform defamation laws across the country. More significantly, national uniformity has been undermined by the decision in Western Australia to not implement further reforms introduced in other states from 2020. As a result, the *Defamation Act 2005* (WA) is the only Defamation Act to not have a defence of publication of matter concerning issues of public interest (found, for example, in s 29A of the NSW Act). Despite this, the public interest of published material remains relevant for some provisions, for example the defence of qualified privilege which continues to exist in its original form in Western Australia

(*Evidence Act 2025* (WA) s 30(3)(a)). Due to the uniformity of Defamation Acts other than Western Australia's, the New South Wales Act will be examined as an exemplar.

In defamation law, media content is assessed as to whether it has defamatory imputations. Defences may be raised in response to these imputations. A successful defence does not mean the material was not defamatory – for example, a statement might have been defamatory, but its publication was justified because the statement was true – but it will mean the plaintiff is unable to obtain damages or some other remedy. The focus is on the media content in question; however, the defences often include significant analysis of the actions and processes that go into the making of content. The employment status or job title of a respondent, and their compliance with professional standards, may also be considered by the courts. While there are several statutory defences, such as academic peer review and honest opinion (*Defamation Act 2005*, ss 30A, 31), for the goal of identifying defamation law's understanding of journalism, the most relevant current defence is the public interest defence.

The public interest defence, as seen above, is closely aligned with ideas of public interest journalism. For the defence of public interest to hold, "the defendant needs to prove that the matter concerns an issue of public interest, and the defendant reasonably believed that the publication of the matter was in the public interest" (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) s 29A(1)(a-b)). The term "matter" is understood as an "article, report or programme" (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 81). It is clear here that this is a content-based understanding of journalism, and there is a focus on whether the content, and its publication, is in the public interest.

The Act gives guidance to the court by providing a number of factors that may be considered when determining whether the defence is established (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) s 29A(3)). Each of the factors has a clear focus on the published content at the centre of the case. These factors that the court may consider are:

> (a) the seriousness of any defamatory imputation carried by the matter published,
>
> (b) the extent to which the matter published distinguishes between suspicions, allegations and proven facts,
>
> (c) the extent to which the matter published relates to the performance of the public functions or activities of the person,
>
> (d) whether it was in the public interest in the circumstances for the matter to be published expeditiously,
>
> (e) the sources of the information in the matter published, including the integrity of the sources,
>
> (f) if a source of the information in the matter published is a person whose identity is being kept confidential, whether there is good reason for the person's identity to be kept confidential (including, for example, to comply with an applicable professional code or standard),
>
> (g) whether the matter published contained the substance of the person's side of the story and, if not, whether a reasonable attempt was made by the defendant to obtain and publish a response from the person,
>
> (h) any other steps taken to verify the information in the matter published,
>
> (i) the importance of freedom of expression in the discussion of issues of public interest (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) s 29A(3)(a-i)).

As defamation law has no statutory definition for journalist or journalism a deeper understanding of this area's understanding of journalism can be found in court judgments where these factors are applied. However, to date, there have been few cases that turned on the public interest defence. The most notable case was *Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, in which a former Australian Army special forces officer, Heston Russell, sued the ABC and two journalists. In his judgment, Justice Lee applied the above factors. While Lee J found that the *topic* of the publication was in the public interest (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 88), he also found that the ABC journalist at the centre of the case failed in several ways. The published matter failed to have an adequate distinction between suspicions and known facts (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 94). The integrity of the source used was not explained in the publication, nor was it explained why the source's identity was kept secret (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 94). And the perspective of Russell, the subject of the story, was not adequately expressed in the publication. For the defence of public interest, it is not enough that the story topic be in the public interest. Facts need to be accurate and distinguished from allegations and suspicions, and fairness needs to be evident in the publication. In this case, the journalist "simply did not do enough" (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 94).

As was seen in the opening of this thesis, YouTube videos have been the focus of defamation action in Australian courts. Two YouTube videos from friendlyjordies, *Bruz* and *Secret Dictatorship*, were found to have defamatory imputations in *Barilaro v Google LLC* [2022] FCA 650. Google was found to be a co-publisher and pleaded, then abandoned, a defence of public interest under s 29A of the NSW *Defamation Act*. This defence was dropped because it was made clear during proceedings that the relevant claims of defamation were only for publications that

were before 1 July 2021, before the public interest defence came into effect (*Barilaro v Google LLC* [2022] FCA 650, p. 76). Despite this, Rares J gave the defence some consideration.

His Honour made clear that several conditions are important if a public interest defence is to be successful and that in this case Google would have failed. These include: the publisher believing the publication to be in the public interest; distinguishing between suspicions and proven facts; and giving right of reply to the subject of the story. As Google was found to be a co-publisher of videos created by friendlyjordies, a public interest defence by Googles would have needed to have relied on actions by the channel that went into the making of the video. Rares J found that Google would have failed in all of the above areas (*Barilaro v Google LLC* [2022] FCA 650, pp. 110–111).

Failure to sufficiently check facts before publication was a major failing of journalists in another case, *Lehrmann v Network Ten Pty Limited* (Trial Judgment) [2024] FCA 369. In this case, the relevant publications were published prior to the public interest defence coming into force. Here, Justice Lee considered and rejected the defence of qualified privilege, which journalists relied upon before s 29A. The statutory version of qualified privilege has now largely been rendered redundant, at least for media defendants, by the public interest defence. In addressing the topic of good journalism Justice Lee found that the journalists being sued by Lehrmann had displayed a "lack of curiosity" about investigating claims made by a source and that this was "especially unreasonable" (*Lehrmann v Network Ten Pty Limited* (Trial Judgment) [2024] FCA 369, p. 253). One of the journalists at the centre of this case was said to have "instinctively" believed her source and that "it is not redolent of the conduct of a highly experienced journalist dealing with facts, not instincts, and ensuring any belief or commitment did not undermine fairness or independence" (*Lehrmann v Network Ten Pty Limited* (Trial Judgment) [2024] FCA 369, p. 262).

While their journalism was criticised, and the qualified defence was unsuccessful, the defendants were successful with their truth defence.

V'landys v Australian Broadcasting Corporation [2023] FCAFC 80 is another defamation judgment that gives insights into how this area of law understands journalism. In this case fairness, via offering right of reply, was emphasised as being important for journalism. This case involved "hard hitting criticism" of the subject, however it did so "without giving [the plaintiff] the opportunity to respond directly. This was not high-quality journalism or fair or decent treatment of him" (*V'landys v Australian Broadcasting Corporation* [2023] FCAFC 80, p. 48). This comment from Justice Rares, Katzmann and O'Callaghan was not central to the case, but it reveals that fairness through right of reply was considered an important part of journalism.

The Defamation Acts and the above judgments clearly have media content as the focus of attention. It is journalism publications that are of concern, though this does not mean that the people involved, or their actions, are irrelevant. Key journalism themes that are important in defamation law, as emphasised in the above cases, include ethical considerations through the demonstration of reasonableness or fairness in the publication, as well as factual accuracy.

3.5.7 News Media Bargaining Code

Passed in 2021, the News Media Bargaining Code (NMBC) was a world-first piece of legislation intended to "address bargaining power imbalances between digital platforms and Australian news businesses" (Dwyer & Wilding, 2023, p. 6). The law that houses the NMBC is Part IVBA of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) (CCA). The NMBC came into being when the *Treasury*

Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Act 2021 was inserted into the CCA as Part IVBA and came into effect in March 2021. At the time of writing the News Bargaining Incentive is being developed to "reinforce" the NMBC (Eisenberg & Markus, 2026).

Media businesses may benefit from the NMBC as it sets up the framework for them to negotiate with major digital platform companies such as Meta and Google. The negotiations determine if, and how much, digital platform companies pay for the use on their platforms of news content from news media businesses. In order for news media businesses to benefit from the NMBC they need to register with the ACMA (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52F (1)).

Registration involves passing several tests. These are the revenue test, the Australian audience test, the professional standards test, and the content test. The revenue test requires that registered media businesses have a revenue exceeding $150,000 per annum (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52M(1)). The Australian audience test requires that the business predominantly operates in Australia and serves Australian audiences (s 52O(1)). The professional standards test requires news sources of a registered business to be subject to editorial standards and codes of conduct (s 52P(1)(a)). The content test requires specific content to be produced by the business, and this provision is specifically relevant for the purposes of this section.

While the NMBC, as a whole, is focused on news media organisations and digital platforms, the NMBC's understanding of journalism is content based. The legislation coins the terms "core news" and "covered news". Core news is defined as:

> content that reports, investigates or explains: (a) issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision-making;

> or (b) current issues or events of public significance for Australians at a local, regional or national level (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52A).

Covered news is "content that is any of the following: (a) core news content; (b) content that reports, investigates or explains current issues or events of interest to Australians" (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52A). Covered news, especially (b), aligns closely with a broad idea of journalism as defined in this thesis (see 3.6). Core news is a de facto definition of public interest journalism content and aligns closely with the public interest journalism definition adopted in the previous chapter. It includes the democratic function of informing the public, as well as the function of facilitating public sphere deliberations. For a news media organisation to pass the content test, it needs to have as its primary purpose the production of core news (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52N(1)).

There is no mention of journalist in the legislation and one mention of "quality journalism" in the professional standards test where it is implied that adhering to professional standards or codes of conduct is connected to the provision of "quality journalism" (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth), s 52P(1)(iv)). The themes in the NMBC are informing the public, informing the public about public interest issues and contributing to public sphere deliberation.

Further insights into the NMBC's understanding of journalism can be seen in decisions by the ACMA to not allow businesses to register due to them failing the content test. In one assessment, the ACMA found that websites of a media business failed the content test as they contained predominantly arts and entertainment news and not enough articles of "broader public interest" (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021c, p. 2). The ACMA determined another application to have failed for insufficient public interest breadth when it

determined "the news source assessed does not meet the content test as it is narrowly focused on golf, golfers, golf courses and other golf related news rather than core news" (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021b, p. 5). In another assessment, the ACMA found that a business passed the content test "because it produces core news and features content that can be considered either relevant in engaging Australians in public debate or informing Australians about current issues or events of public significance on a national level" (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2021a, p. 5).

The NMBC's understanding of journalism is content based and centred around the definitions of covered news and core news. These two definitions detail the nature of journalism content. Additionally, core news includes the purpose of journalism content which includes informing citizens so that they are better able to take part in democratic processes. The NMBC raises questions about what kind of news media content is worth protecting and how that should occur. It also raises fascinating questions about whether digital platforms are required to make deals with youtubers who operate businesses producing journalistic content, and whether they should be required to make such deals. The key issues concern whether youtubers predominantly produce "core news", and whether they would satisfy the other requirements for registration by the ACMA. If the answers are yes, youtubers potentially stand to gain millions of dollars in funding from platforms. This issue is explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

3.6 Journalism defined: Aligning journalism with the public interest

This chapter has shown that the law has no consistent understanding of journalism, even at the most basic level. This means that there is no single authoritative journalism-related legal definition on which to base a journalism definition for this thesis. This lack of consistency in legal understandings of journalism mirrors the "theoretical anarchy" of journalism studies detailed in Chapter 2. As there is no suitable "off the shelf" definition in either the academic literature or Australian law, in this chapter I will develop two journalism definitions for the purposes of analysing youtubers: of **journalism** and of **public interest journalism**. These two definitions are necessary to provide clarity and to avoid confusion in the face of the varying ways the word journalism is used in the literature, and the law, not to mention everyday parlance. Journalism is a term that is often used as a generalised label for a diverse range of media work. At the same time, it is often used as a specific concept related to supporting democracy. The former is broad; the latter is narrow. Rather than invoke the term journalism for these two different, contrasting concepts in my analysis of youtubers, I have separated the two definitions. The "journalism" definition is intended to be an inclusive term that captures a large range of media work. The "public interest journalism" definition is more narrowly-focused on journalism's purpose as described in chapter two – its core democratic functions.

To draft a broad and inclusive definition of journalism, I combined common elements from several formulations in the literature as well as themes identified in legal understandings of journalism analysed in this chapter. I propose that the most suitable type of definition, for the purposes of this thesis, is an activity-based definition. This is because it focuses on the actions one needs to perform; it can therefore be applied to a great range of media producers. However, it still has a degree of clarity and precision, prescribing what it is for someone to qualify as a

journalist. This is in contrast to other definitions which can be too nebulous, such as ideology-based definitions, or are too tied to pre-existing occupation and professional labels. For the purpose of assessing youtubers, the former are unhelpfully vague, and the latter are overly restrictive.

In the literature, activity-based, also known as process-based, definitions vary in minor ways. However, there are several elements commonly associated with the process of creating journalism content. These elements include: editorial independence; information gathering; and regular publication for public consumption (Elvestad & Phillips, 2018, p. 50; Stephens, 2014, p. xiii). Activity-based journalism understandings were also the most numerous among Australian Acts. The key theme identified in law that is suitable for a broad and inclusive definition is that which was most common – informing the public. For this thesis, based on my assessment of the relevant literature and law, I adopt the following definition of journalism:

> ***Journalism*** **is the editorially independent activity of collecting, interpreting and regularly publishing newsworthy content.**

The phrase "editorially independent" means that the media creator has no direct personal interest, financial or otherwise, in the matters being reported on. When media producers have such an interest, irrespective of the veracity of the facts presented, they are generally producing material within areas such as advertising, public relations, or propaganda (Zollmann, 2019, p. 335). Newsworthy information is new information that contains one or more of the news values developed by Harcup & O'Neill (2017). News values are themes that provide "a shared shorthand operational understanding of what working journalists are required to produce" in

order to publish news articles, and they include "bad news", "conflict", "the power elite" and "entertainment" (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017, pp. 1470, 1482).

As defined here, journalism is a broad concept related to news production that does not perform any core democratic functions. However, it captures much of the work that is done by people publishing media, especially those working for news corporations. As such it is a useful expansive definition against which youtubers can be measured.

Building on this "low bar" definition of journalism, I propose another that embodies the core democratic functions of journalism – a definition for public interest journalism. As identified and discussed in detail in the previous chapter, the three core democratic functions of journalism are: informing the public about public interest issues; facilitating public sphere deliberations; and holding power to account. The first two of these democratic functions were also identified in Australian law with at least one of the two present in 24 of the 78 Acts analysed in this chapter. In order to create a "high bar" that will be the primary benchmark for assessing youtubers later in this thesis, I propose the following definition:

> ***Public interest journalism*** **is the editorially independent activity, guided by ethical considerations, of collecting, interpreting and regularly publishing verifiable newsworthy content on public interest issues so that people may be better informed and engage in better decision making in the public sphere.**

This definition builds on the base journalism definition in a number of ways, the most significant being the addition of journalism's core democratic functions via the introduction of "verifiable content on public interest issues". People can make better political and societal decisions when

informed, with accurate information, about newsworthy public interest topics. They are also better positioned to engage with others in public sphere deliberation as it was described in Chapter 2 (see 2.2.2).

In this definition, ethical considerations means that the media producer shows awareness of ethical concerns in their processes and publications, and acts on that awareness. Ethical considerations were found to be a commonly occurring theme in legal understandings of journalism. Sometimes this was made explicit, including in defamation law's consideration of fairness (see 3.5.6). However, in most cases in the law, ethical considerations comprise the requirement for compliance with a code of ethics, or membership of an organisation that has such a code or set of standards. One such codes is the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance's Journalist Code of Ethics, which journalists sign up for if they voluntarily become MEAA members. Among other provisions, the MEAA code commits journalists to accuracy, fairness and timely correction of errors (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, n.d.). Academic literature also helps prescribe what comprises "ethical considerations" for journalists. Above all, the academic literature that deals with journalism ethics often notes that minimisation of harm is a fundamental journalistic ethical consideration, and arguably even the foremost of the "core axioms" that underpin journalism practice (Thomas, 2018, p. 230). On this point, the author is using "journalism" in a way that aligns with my public interest journalism definition (see 2.2).

I also include "verifiable" in my definition of public interest journalism. For the democratic function of informing the public to *actually* inform people, the information they receive needs to be factual, it needs to be accurate. If information is verifiable and honestly interpreted, the risk of misinformation is lowered. If a media text fails to be accurate, then it hinders fact-based public sphere deliberation. Media content that is not based on accurate information does not fulfill any

of the democratic functions of journalism. Therefore, to meet this conceptualisation of public interest journalism, a media producer must take reasonable steps to ensure accuracy, and this is possible by using information and content that is verifiable.

Not all journalism elements from the academic literature and Australian law were included in my definition of public interest journalism. The themes "being in an occupation", "being part of a profession" and "engaging in business" were not included in the definition. This is because fulfilling the democratic functions of journalism does not require a specific professional socialisation, occupation status, or business. Including these themes would put arbitrary and unnecessary limits in the definition – and would necessarily mean that youtubers are unable to qualify as producers of public interest journalism. Indeed, when they are present, there is no justification given for occupation or profession being included in legal definitions.

The "public interest" is a critical part of my definition for public interest journalism. However, defining "public interest issues" or "the public interest" is challenging as it is context and time dependent. As such, judgment on this is required when applying my public interest journalism definition. However, this is not unlike judgments over key news values of timeliness, relevance, and magnitude, which are time and context dependent, when assessing news content. Informing the public about public interest issues is one of the core democratic functions of journalism in my definition. It was also a major theme that emerged in my analysis of Australian law, and it is worth some time unpacking what it is in law, and how I understand it in my definition.

Despite its prevalence in law, public interest is not explicitly defined in legislation or case law that I have investigated. Moreover, it has been stated that public interest "should not be defined" in

law (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2014, p. 24) and that "courts have always struggled with determining what is public interest as a matter of law" (Lester, 2012, p. 161). Instead of a definition, what I have found is that, when needed, judgments are made as to whether a specific set of facts or situation is or is not in the public interest. Alternatively, there might be an inquiry into whether the public interest is outweighed by another interest, such as an individual's interest in privacy. Occasionally, a judgment will include statements as to what broad public interest issues may be taken into account. Such judgments and statements provide useful and explicit examples of how the public interest should be understood.

The official activities of governments have been judged to be in the public interest, with those activities regarded as particularly relevant and important for citizens within the relevant jurisdictions (*Bailey v WIN Television NSW Pty Ltd* [2020] NSWSC 232). The treatment of Indigenous Australians by "Australian authorities and white Australians is a matter of public interest" (*Australian Broadcasting Corporation v Comalco ltd,* (1986) 68 ALR 259, p. 21). Other areas determined to be of public interest include management of public building projects, the conduct of public servants, food quality and safety, and issues of political integrity (*Chau v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd* [2019] FCA 185; *Hive And Wellness Pty Ltd v Mulvany (no 2)* [2019] VSC 757; *Johnston v Australian Broadcasting Commission* (1993) 113 FLR 254; *Renouf v Federal Capital Press of Australia Pty Ltd* (1977) 17 ACTR 35).

While no definitions are given for the public interest in any Act, as highlighted above (see 3.5.4), the Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Material of Local Significance) Licence Condition 2024 may well be the closest thing we have to a legal list of public interest topics. Topics that it lists include: economic issues; political issues; social issues; education issues; public health issues; employment issues; and organisations that deal with "community, welfare,

religious, educational, or other community services" (ACMA, 2024b s 9(2-4)). These examples of public interest topics in Australian law provide a solid foundation for applying my definition of public interest journalism to youtubers.

3.7 Conclusion

Frustratingly, Australian law lacks a clear or coherent understanding of journalism. Rather, there is an assortment of terms, definitions and understandings that often have little to do with each other and are sometimes contradictory. Jurisdictions, areas of law, and often even individual Acts have numerous journalism terms, definitions and understandings. The analysis in this chapter has shown that even for the most conventional of journalism arrangements, such as a senior reporter at an established newspaper, it's impossible to get a clear picture of how the law treats journalism. The opacity is even worse when the focus turns to evolving forms of journalism on social media platforms. This makes it hard to assess whether youtubers produce journalism in the eyes of the law. In the law, there is no singular journalism with which to assess youtubers. Rather, it is more productive to ask whether youtubers qualify for journalism-related definitions in specific areas of law, in specific jurisdictions. Often, the answer is vexingly unclear.

Despite the diversity of journalism-related understandings and definitions in Australian law, there are important themes that I have identified in legal understandings of journalism (Figure 3). Two of the themes identified align with the idea of journalism's democratic functions. These are informing the public about public interest issues and contributing to public sphere deliberations. Still, inconsistency reigns, with one or both of these themes appearing in only 24 out of the 78 statutes included in this chapter's analysis, and the function of holding power to account not

identified at all. Meanwhile, a number of themes align with various journalism definitions from the academic literature analysed in the previous chapter. These themes include regularity of publication, a link to profession, and informing the public in a general sense. Some themes identified in law were absent from definitions in the literature, the most significant being ethical considerations, though this theme is present in literature on ethical journalism practice. Taken together, the journalism themes that I have identified in Australian law, coupled with my analysis of the academic literature, provide substantial grounding for the definition of public interest journalism that I have articulated and will use in the chapters that follow.

Just as the academic literature is inconsistent and confusing, there is no single legal understanding or definition that can be used to assess whether any particular independent youtuber is a journalist, or whether they produce journalism, under the law. As a result, select legal understandings of journalism will be directly applied to specific youtubers in Chapter 7. First, though, I turn directly to YouTube. In the next chapter, I interview 20 "serious youtubers" to understand in more depth this type of media creator. In Chapter 5, three of these 20 are analysed more forensically to assess whether they produce public interest journalism as defined in this thesis. And in Chapter 6, before turning back to the law in Chapter 7, I analyse interviews with ABC journalists to gain insights into how youtuber norms and practices are impacting traditional journalism producers. For the next three chapters, then, the research shifts from theoretical and doctrinal to empirical as I ask: what exactly are these youtubers doing?

Chapter 4 – "Serious youtubers": Practices, ethics and businesses

4.1 Introduction: Finding serious youtubers

YouTube is a sprawling platform which operates in over 100 countries with billions of hours of video watched each day (YouTube, 2026a, pp. 2, 8). A passing glance at the top YouTube channels could give the impression that looking for public interest journalism on the platform is a fool's errand. Most of the largest channels focus on music, comedy skits, dance, and reality-tv-style content (YouTube, 2026b). However, the friendlyjordies example from the introduction chapter shows that audiences can consider YouTuber videos to be journalism. Moreover, surveys consistently show that more than one fifth of people around the world go to YouTube for their news (Egan et al., 2026, p. 21).

If youtubers are to be assessed and investigated as to whether they produce public interest journalism, then which youtubers should be selected from the immense, turbulent ocean of content creators that is YouTube? To address this challenge, I developed the hypothesis that journalism is most likely to be found by examining youtubers who regularly publish videos on serious topics that are commonly associated with public interest issues. These topics include politics, societal issues, and economics. In one of my early interviews, I described the type of youtubers I was focussing on and their response was, "oh, serious youtubers?" and that term stuck with me (Z. Burke, interview with author, October 23, 2023). I then began to use the label "serious youtuber" for the, as yet unnamed, type of youtuber I was interested in studying. My interviewees are all drawn from this category of serious youtuber: youtubers who publish videos about serious topics.

Overall, I contacted a diverse range of 79 YouTube creators who publish on serious topics, of whom 20 agreed to be interviewed. A key goal of these interviews was to identify whether interviewees were likely to be journalism producers. To aid in this task, interviewees were asked about their motivations, processes, ethics, businesses, experiences, and professional opinions. Interviewees were also asked about various aspects of journalism. It quickly became apparent that the interviewees had more in common than simply making videos about serious topics. In this chapter, I found that serious youtuber is a distinct and identifiable occupation, one that shares specific norms and common practices. Moreover, these shared norms and practices exist despite significant differences in nationality, gender and education background among the interviewees. And it is among these serious youtubers that an effective search for journalism producers can take place. Four major findings were identified in this chapter regarding serious youtubers: there are common practices; they take ethics seriously; they run serious businesses; and they have serious issues around professional identity.

4.2 Literature review: Norms and practices of youtubers

Studies of social media norms and practices on YouTube often stick to a high-level analysis and rarely discuss specific practices that social media content creators actually engage in, or specific norms that they share. Hutchinson et al.'s *Social Media in Society* (2024) is a good example of a high-level study into the practices of social media creators. Therein, explaining "social media practices" and "platform practices" is one of the key aims (Hutchinson et al., 2024, pp. 1, 10). However, this focus on practices does not go into specific youtuber practices in any detail. Only one youtuber practice is mentioned explicitly, that of youtubers "welcoming their audience" (Hutchinson et al., 2024, p. 92).

When specific youtuber norms or practices are discussed in the literature, it is often a secondary focus. Or the study is focused on a narrow number of specific practices, or a specific YouTube content creator. For example, McMullan (2021) undertook a detailed analysis of the history and evolution of jump cuts on YouTube, using the trailblazing and influential youtuber Casey Neistat as the single illustrative example. McMullan concluded that "creators as 'serious amateurs' revel in the lack of rigid conventions" and this freedom allows them to experiment with "more traditional forms of moving image grammar – such as the jump cut" (2021, p. 11).

Lewis (2020) performed a case study of three creators on YouTube, and used the terms "youtuber", "influencer" and "micro-celebrity" interchangeably. In the paper micro-celebrity is the preferred term and is defined as "a set of practices adapted from traditional celebrity culture that enables social media users to gain attention and popularity" (Lewis, 2020, p. 203). Despite this definition, few specifics are given for what this "set of practices" actually involves. The only practice that is mentioned is an example of cultivating "transparency and subjectivity" by showing "behind-the-scenes processes at work to their audiences" (Lewis, 2020, p. 213). Even this is ascribed to the vlogging genre rather than youtubers or miro-celebrities.

While not being their main objective, some studies have identified several specific norms and practices that will be discussed later in this this chapter. One useful study by Himma-Kadakas & Ferrer-Conill (2022) analysed five YouTube videos of varying genres that included "news" to some extent. While not the main focus, they identified numerous youtuber "techniques", such as "jump-cuts to accelerate the pace of the presentation", "memes and pictures", "everyday language", "bloopers", and "sound effects to emphasise the facts or jokes" (Himma-Kadakas & Ferrer-Conill, 2022, p. 159). Though not a comprehensive analysis of common youtuber practices, it is a helpful starting point for cataloguing youtuber norms and common practices.

Youtubers speaking directly to the camera is commonly discussed in the literature. When, as Frobenius (2014) found, YouTube content creators deliver monologues to the camera, they "employ a range of strategies that make their speech resemble a multi-party conversation" in order to make their videos "lively and to a degree entertaining" (Frobenius, 2014, pp. 71–72). Strategies employed include using "the unspecific term of address *you*" (Frobenius, 2014, p. 62), making specific requests for interaction, such as leaving a comment below the video, and gesturing, usually by pointing, to something that is "found in the context of the website" (Frobenius, 2014, p. 65), for example pointing down to refer to the comment section, or pointing to a top corner of frame to indicate a video card.

The film studies scholar MacDowell argued that for non-fiction videos, "communicative self-narration is the narrational norm of 'ordinary YouTube'" (2025, p. 1415). This narrational norm of ordinary YouTube involves youtubers speaking directly to the camera, addressing the audience "as themselves" (MacDowell, 2025, p. 1415). These types of videos evolved from the early days of vlogging and contain "numerous stylistic conventions" such as jump-cuts and axial cuts, as well as "non-diegetic music; superimposed images/text; post-production zooms; handheld walk-and-talk sequences" (MacDowell, 2025, p. 1411). While MacDowell's study focuses on just one channel, ContraPoints, it is an example of in-depth analysis of youtuber narrative practices.

From the literature, we can begin to sketch out a picture of youtuber norms and common practices. Key youtuber practices mentioned in the literature include:

- speaking straight to camera, directly to the audience,

- jump cuts,
- everyday language/conversational tone,
- addressing the audience as "you".

These youtuber elements that emerge from the academic literature provided a solid starting point for my own observations of YouTube channels. In this chapter, I summarise my findings regarding norms and common practices of serious youtubers, with a view to exploring, in the following chapter, whether they engage in journalism.

4.3 Method and definitions

For this chapter, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 YouTube content creators who fit the definition of serious youtuber (Appendix G). The interviews were then analysed using a thematic analysis. To aid analysis, key definitions were created for "youtuber" and "serious youtuber".

4.3.1 Youtuber

As understood in this thesis, a youtuber is not simply any person or organisation that publishes videos on YouTube. This thesis takes a very specific understanding of the term:

> **A youtuber is an independent content creator who speaks face-to-camera in planned, pre-recorded and edited videos which are created specifically for publication on YouTube.**

All the interviewees in this study fit this definition and said that they recognised the importance of the included elements. The independence of youtubers was seen to be particularly important. One interviewee, Dutch youtuber Jochem Boodt from the channel Present Past, said, "YouTube content creators are not created equal. A youtuber is, in essence, an individual creator. Not part of a corporation" (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023). This proved to be a recurring theme. Another interviewee, the British youtuber Georgie Taylor, who runs the channel münecat, said, "To say you're a youtuber means that you have a channel that's mostly your work and isn't the work of a corporation" (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

The above definition of youtuber is deliberately restrictive and narrow. It excludes channels that are primarily made up of streaming content, podcasts, and content created by large businesses or other institutions. YouTube channels that primarily live stream and/or upload segments of streams are excluded as their content is streamed and recorded live rather than planned and pre-recorded. Podcasts-type videos on YouTube are similarly excluded as that format involves people having conversations on camera rather than speaking directly to a camera.

4.3.2 Serious youtuber

The concept of serious youtuber is one that emerged from the data:

> **Serious youtuber is a sub-category of youtuber who regularly publishes pre-recorded and edited videos for YouTube about serious topics such as political, social, or economic issues.**

The use of the word serious here is in reference to the topics discussed, not the tone of the content. Serious does not mean humourless. In fact, as we shall see, humour is a common feature of serious youtuber videos.

This definition is narrower than youtuber and thus excludes even more types of content. Channels were excluded from this definition if they focused on product reviews, self-help, or tutorials. While a serious youtuber may include vox pops in a video, there are numerous channels that make vox pops their main focus rather than a supporting element. These vox pops-focused channels are excluded from the serious youtuber definition. Vlogs are excluded too. The term vlog, short for video blog, is a category that often lacks clarity, even in academic literature, as style can be confused with content (Frobenius, 2014; R. Lewis, 2020). For this thesis, a vlog channel is one with regular face-to-camera videos that focus on the personal life or daily activities of a creator. They are excluded from the serious youtuber definition.

4.3.3 Participant selection

The topics serious youtubers cover have significant overlap with journalism work. Moreover, focusing on serious youtubers has practical benefits for sample selection. YouTube is a huge platform with 30,000 hours of video uploaded every hour and comprising a multitude of genres, formats, and communities (Google Support, n.d.-f). Narrowing the focus to serious youtubers creates necessary practical boundaries for this research; intuitively, it is also more likely to be where journalism is found, if it is found anywhere among independent youtubers.

The sampling method blended innovative elements with elements of approaches taken in previous research. The adoption and adaption of elements was necessary because previous sampling methods proved insufficient for this thesis. A common method employed in past studies was using the YouTube search function and selecting from the search results. Studies that use this method include Frobenius (2014, p. 61), Thomson and Bock (2025, p. 1806), and Djerf-Pierre et al. (2019, p. 238). This process, applied in isolation, has limitations. This biggest limitation is that it relies on video titles, descriptions, and other factors being descriptive and matching the search terms (Google Support, n.d.-f). Often this is not the case as titles can be cryptic or part of an inside joke with a channel's audience. Also, video descriptions are often without details about the video topic. An example of this is the friendlyjordies video called *I didn't want to make this video* which is a critique of the Australian Labor government's treatment of whistleblowers (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2023a). The title of the video gives no indication of the video topic, and the description section contains no actual description of the video contents. This highlights the shortcomings of relying on search. If a study used the YouTube search function alone to find videos on whistleblower treatment in Australia, then that friendlyjordies video would likely be missed.

Other methods of sample selection on YouTube include randomised selection from the whole platform (McGrady et al., 2023) as well as selecting the biggest youtubers (Himma-Kadakas et al., 2018). These two approaches were evidently not suitable for my research. In other studies, unique sample selection methods are applied and explained in detail. Lichtenstein et al. (2021, p. 1109) began with a "search strategy" that used a "News and Politics" filter, but when that was deemed inadequate, they added a snowballing strategy where they investigated the channels that

their initial sample linked to in video descriptions.[2] Another snowballing approach begins with popular political figures on YouTube and expands the study by investigating the guests on their channel (S. C. Lewis & Molyneux, 2018; Munger & Phillips, 2022, p. 199). These snowballing approaches focus on the network of the initial sample and again are not appropriate for my research as I am not focussing on a networked group as a goal; however, a version of snowballing, as described below, was part of my methodology.

The above examples are some of the more detailed when it comes to explaining sample selection on YouTube. Some studies, for example Hurcombe (2025), Lewis (2020), and MacDowell (2025) do not give any information on how they selected the youtubers in their studies. Some scholars even make explicit the lack of systemic selection, including when Vernallis (2013, p. 127) wrote how one YouTube video was selected for analysis: "My students found it for me".

For this chapter, serious youtuber (as defined above) was used as a selection criterion. Additional selection criteria included the channel being in English and of a substantial size with more than 50,000 subscribers. The target number of interviewees was between 15 and 25. In determining sample size, the main consideration was obtaining enough rich data for an in-depth understanding of serious youtubers. This approach is in line with a general consensus in qualitative research where sample selection should be based on considerations around the appropriateness and quality of the data rather than the size of the sample (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025, p. 1462; Morse, 2015, p. 1318; Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1904). In the end, 20 youtubers

[2] The paper mentions that the snowballing strategy was built on the "blogroll of the newly found YouTubers" (p. 1109). The term "blogroll" didn't seem to fit the context of YouTube, so I contacted the authors. One of the authors replied saying that, in retrospect, the term blogroll was "not the adequate term" and that they meant "the content creators recommended in their channel description" (H. Henn, personal communication, October 12, 2025).

were interviewed. This sample size is substantial for a study of this nature, and is considerably larger than similar studies in the literature which generally include one to five YouTube channels.

Interviewees were selected using non-probability purposive sampling. By this I mean "a deliberate process of selecting context, materials or participants who share specific qualities that are relevant and have the potential to answer the inquiry about the phenomenon of interest" (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025, p. 1462). This sampling approach was adopted as it allows participants to "provide rich information and, accordingly, yield an in-depth understanding of the investigated phenomena" (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025, p. 1462).

Saturation is generally seen in qualitative research as an essential factor in determining the appropriateness of sample sizes (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1894). However, "despite having apparently attained something of the status of orthodoxy, saturation is defined within the literature in varying ways – or is sometimes undefined" (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1894). In their study on the use of saturation in qualitative research, Saunders et al. identified four ways in which saturation appears in the literature: theoretical saturation, inductive thematic saturation, a priori thematic saturation, and data saturation (2018, p. 1897). In this chapter, the principal saturation focus was on data collection and the degree to which data from each interview repeated the findings from previous interviews. In later interviews data was repeated and no new data emerged, confirming that data saturation had been achieved.

Sample diversity

Sample diversity was sought and achieved regarding geographic location, nationality, religion, and gender. The aim of this diversity was to see whether there were significant commonalities among the analysed channels despite this diversity. If so, the idea that serious youtuber is an identifiable category is strengthened, and the norms and practices are more likely to apply to that category of creator across the platform, as opposed to being valid only for a specific geographical area, nationality, gender, or other category. In these regards, given that diversity of the sample was a deliberate recruitment strategy, it can be claimed that the final sample is to some extent representative of the wider serious youtuber community.

While diversity was achieved in a number of ways, diversity of political orientation was more limited than hoped. The 79 youtubers in the sample pool exhibited a range of political views from across the political spectrum. However, the 20 who ultimately agreed to participate and who expressed political opinions were like-minded. While most of the 20 interviewees do not express any explicit political leanings on their channels, six interviewees do. The interviewees who hold publicly stated political views self-describe as progressive, leftist, or pro-union. Of the explicitly self-identifying conservative or right-wing youtubers who were contacted, none agreed to be interviewed. As such, it may be that self-identifying conservative or right-wing serious youtubers have different norms, practices, and motivations compared to the interviewees in this chapter. Alternatively, they may have exactly the same norms, practices and motivations. None of them gave reasons for not participating.

Sampling and the algorithm

YouTube's algorithmic recommendation system begins to influence what is shown to a user from the first video that is watched. By its very nature, the algorithm has the potential to obscure or to surface much of what is published on the platform. Algorithms on YouTube develop video recommendations based on the actions and watch history of users. As YouTube declares, the recommendation system on YouTube "is designed to anticipate and meet a user's needs to drive value through relevant and satisfying viewing experiences" (YouTube, n.d.-a). Algorithmic video recommendations are primarily found in the Up Next panel, end of video recommendations, YouTube search results and on the Homepage. In the face of this, two strategies were employed to identify suitable channels: "algorithmic snowballing" and "control sessions".

The algorithmic snowballing sampling began with two large YouTube channels that had received significant media attention from major news organisations for their investigations and politically relevant videos. The two channels were the Australian-based friendlyjordies and the US-based Coffeezilla. In this initial phase of the research, I watched more than 25 videos from each of friendlyjordies and Coffeezilla with a signed-in Australian YouTube account. During this process, if videos about serious topics from an independent youtuber were recommended to me, I would also watch them. If the channel of those videos fit the selection criteria, and had publicly available contact information, they would be added to the sample pool. I would also regularly use the YouTube search function as a way to contribute to the algorithmic snowballing effect and influence future recommendations. Search terms included general topics, such as "politics" and "economy", as well as specific terms related to current events at the time of searching, for example, "election", "war", and "AI".

The second strategy was using control sessions. This was done by using YouTube while not logged in, in a browser that was in private mode where browser history and tracking cookies were not saved. Three browsers were used: Firefox, Chrome, and Edge. A VPN was also used to "locate" the search in different countries to reduce geography-based search bias. In each of these control sessions, the Homepage was observed, as was the "News" filter. Videos that appeared to be about serious topics were watched and the channels of those videos inspected. As with the algorithmic snowballing strategy, videos in the Up Next and video end sections were watched, and the search function used.

Using this double-pronged sampling strategy I watched, in part or in full, more than 2,000 videos. The above strategies yielded a total pool of 79 independent serious youtubers who were contacted (Appendix H). More than 85% of the pool was identified using the algorithmic snowballing while the remainder were identified in the control sessions. Contact started in early 2023, via publicly available contact details, such as the email on their channel's profile.

4.3.4 Interview process

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted between June 2023 and November 2024. The interviews took place over more than a year due to the often-slow response times and interviewee availability. The interviews were an average of one and a half hours in duration. Two interviewees chose to be interviewed in person and 18 interviewees elected to be interviewed online via video call. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to aid the analysis process. The recordings were first transcribed using auto-transcription software and these transcripts were then manually checked and corrected before analysis took place. In mid-2025, I sent interviewees direct quotes from their interviews so that they could check, confirm, and update

their quotes where needed. The youtuber quotes that appear in this thesis were all confirmed by interviewees.

The interviews were semi-structured, and conversations varied in their flow. However, each interview was structured around the same indicative questions (Appendix I). The interview conversations and lines of questioning were heavily influenced by observations I had made when I watched videos, as mentioned above, from the channels that made up the total sample pool. Observations of interviewee channels and videos prior to interviews meant that I could be detailed and specific in my follow-up questions. For example, indicative question 5 asks broadly about presentation and editing styles and, depending on the answer, I would point out and ask about specific elements of their videos.

4.3.5 Thematic analysis

Interview transcripts were analysed by applying a thematic analysis, which is "a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). The thematic analysis allows for the identification and sensemaking of what is common across the interviews and why these commonalities matter for the question being asked (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). The thematic analysis used here applied both deductive and inductive "theory-driven data coding and analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58). The overarching theory driving the coding and analysis was the democratic functions of journalism approach, which was established in Chapter 2 and reinforced in Chapter 3 with the introduction of my definition for public interest journalism.

The specific process applied was adapted from Braun & Clarke's phased approach to thematic analysis (2012, p. 60). There were four phases in this thematic analysis. Phase one involved the observation of YouTube videos and channels of youtubers who formed the sample pool. This allowed draft codes to be developed based on what was observed, covering topics such as editing choices, mode of address, and calls for audience support. Phase two involved becoming familiar with the interview data. This involved listening to the audio recordings of the interviews and reading and double checking the transcripts. Phase three comprised code development based on the interview data by creating new codes and adding sub-codes. And phase four involved theme development where a theme is understood as something that "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 82).

4.4 Major findings

The category of serious youtuber was initially developed as a selection tool. However, a major finding presented in this chapter is that the interviewees represent a distinct and identifiable occupation. This occupation is distinct from broad, and often vague, categories of online work such as influencer, content creator and youtuber. This finding emerged from the thematic analysis of the 20 interview transcripts. My data show that serious youtubers are identifiable as a distinct occupation due to their common production practices, norms, business practices, and attitudes (Table 3).

The themes, common production practices, norms, business practices, and attitudes fall within the following categories:

1. Serious youtubers are serious about authenticity and audience connection.
2. Serious youtubers take ethics seriously.
3. Serious youtubers run serious businesses.
4. Serious youtubers are part of a professional community despite having a serious identity crisis.

In the following sections, quotes from interviewees are used to explain and exemplify these findings. These quotes also are in themselves valuable data that give a deep insight into the world of serious youtubers.

4.4.1 Finding 1: Serious youtubers are serious about authenticity and audience connection

Serious youtubers consider authenticity, and more specifically the *perception* of authenticity, to be extremely important for their success on YouTube. The drive for a perception of authenticity is a major factor in shaping their practices. This section begins by showing that serious youtubers take authenticity seriously. It then moves on to how this desire for authenticity shapes presentation practices, including the imperative of audience connections. Finally, this section ends with an overview of the "grammar" of youtubers, a grammar which is ultimately driven by the desire to connect with audiences in ways that are perceived as authentic.

Authenticity is key

A key theme that emerged from interviews was that a perception of authenticity is necessary to connect with viewers and thus build an audience. Interviewees felt that presenting an authentic self is a major reason viewers watch their videos. Dr. Anna Danylchuk, a Ukrainian youtuber who reports on the war in her country, said:

> People are coming for an ordinary person. They often tell me that I am their Ukrainian friend, and maybe they are not that interested in the history of Ukraine, or the Soviet mess. They want to know what's going on today in the country (A. Danylchuk, interview with author, December 12, 2023).

One of the most important considerations for creating authentic connections with viewers, according to interviewees, is building the style of a channel around a youtuber's personality (Figure 6). Interviewees said the personal styles of youtubers is why people go to YouTube for video content. Practices around presentation and editing are done with personality and authenticity in mind. British youtuber Taylor, from the channel münecat, publishes videos about systemic injustices and issues concerning sexism and misogyny. Taylor said:

> My channel is built quite closely around my personality. My videos are like a friend telling you about what's going on in the world rather than a corporation. I think that's why a lot of people prefer YouTube because they want to consume content in a way that a friend would tell them about it rather than the language being very stale and processed through loads of producers and stuff like that. I want to make sure that everything's always really personal to me and authentic (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

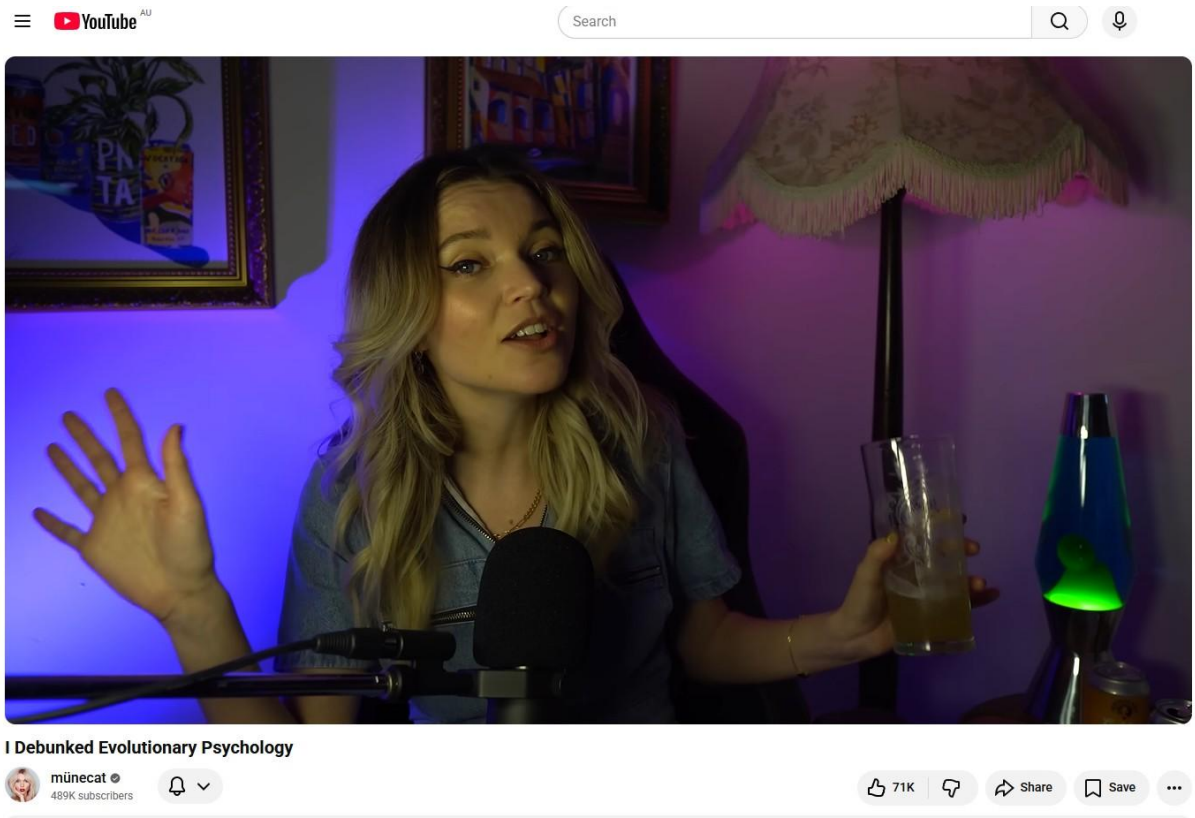

Figure 6: Taylor, beer in hand, discusses serious topics in a manner that showcases her personality (Taylor [münecat], 2024).

Interviewees said that building channels around themselves and their personalities is important because it leads to more financial success. Boodt, who uses a historical lens to analyse contemporary socio-political issues, said:

> It's about me. That's the strategy. If I share more about myself, if I tell you what I think of certain things, I can establish a strong connection with the audience, which gives two things. I think they will trust me more as an arbiter of truth. But also, to be very blunt, if you do it, it'll make you more money (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

John Cadogan had a long career in print, television, and radio as an automotive journalist before becoming a youtuber and he also stressed the imperative of personalisation and authenticity on YouTube. Cadogan said:

> On YouTube, you can be an overweight, bald 60-year-old man who doesn't shave anymore, and get TV-type numbers worth of views. That's because of authenticity, real authenticity, as opposed to the image of authenticity, which is what TV news tries to do (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

Projected authenticity leads to audience connection according to interviewees. For most interviewees this was a belief they had from the outset. For Cadogan it was a revelation after he made the transition from mainstream journalism work to YouTube. Cadogan said:

> I spent roughly 20 years on national television on Channel Nine and Channel Seven, at the time when A Current Affair and Today Tonight were both getting about 2 million viewers an evening. At that time, I travelled extensively. I was in public a lot, and I would get recognised infrequently at most. Every time I go out in public now, I get recognised. More than anything else this tells me about cut-through and authenticity. Having played both games, two decades on television and a decade on YouTube, the there's no comparison. The engagement with actual people is off the fricking chart on YouTube (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

Interviewees said that the practice of having a single presenter with consistent motifs is important for connecting with audiences and presenting authenticity. Artem Dikarev, a Canadian-based youtuber, whose channel The Russian Dude covers the Russia-Ukraine war, said:

> Regular news, CNN, ABC News whatever, is created by a corporation. And you don't feel a close connection. Here it is creator-created news. This allows for better connection between us creators and the audience. So, it's always me, always the same guy, always wearing the same yellow hoodie (A. Dikarev, interview with author, October 25, 2023).

All interviewees made it clear that YouTube was considered the best platform, especially compared to vertical video platforms, for building a dedicated audience that has the potential to become a community. Barcza expressed this common opinion when he said:

> One thing that I like about YouTube is that, compared to almost any other media, especially YouTube shorts, Instagram Reels, and even TikTok, you have a what feels like a relatively solid relationship with the channel that you're consuming content from (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

Presenting authenticity

One of the most common presentation practices raised by interviewees as being important was having their face on camera and speaking directly to their audience. Every interviewee stressed the importance of speaking direct to camera in a conversational mode of address. It is seen as an important way to create perceptions of authenticity and build connections with the audience. Cahal Moran is a former lecturer, and current Visiting Fellow, at the London School of Economics. He left his academic job to focus on his YouTube channel, Unlearning Economics. Moran said:

> Videos with people's faces tend to get more engagement. I think just having something moving on the screen helps our lizard brains. Having a person to see adds a personal aspect. If your viewers feel like you're talking to them during the video that's the point, right? (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

For Jessie Earl from the LGBTQ-focused US channel, Jessie Gender, moments of speaking to the camera can be used strategically, separated by other footage. Earl said, "I have myself on camera for moments of vulnerability or when giving my opinion and then use clips or visuals otherwise" (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Konrad Michalski, from the Australian channel Punter's Politics, stressed the point that speaking face-to-camera can also build trust with the audience. Michalski said:

> Showing your face in videos always helps, because people want to get to know you. They want to get to know the room that you're in. They can trust a face more than a faceless channel (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

Based on my observations of videos from the sample pool, and confirmed by interviewees, the clothing that serious youtubers wear is also a key part of presenting to camera. Clothing is rarely formal or business-like. It usually covers a fairly narrow spectrum from casual to smart casual. Most of the men interviewed are very casually dressed: they generally wear a T-shirt and are often not clean shaven. By contrast, the five women interviewed for this chapter are consistently better dressed than the men. They wear smart casual outfits as a minimum and, unlike many of the men interviewed, they are always well groomed. This may reflect broad societal pressures regarding women's appearance. Or it may reflect the well-documented pressures and higher

expectations put on women regarding their appearance in traditional mass media such as television (O' Brien, 2019, p. 72). This distinction is not a focus of the research.

Regardless of the casualness of their attire, most interviewees put a lot of thought into what they wear. Their "look" is an important part of presenting authenticity and creating a style around their personality. For some, they often have multiple outfits or costumes in the one video to add theatricality to their storytelling. Even if the look is casual and ungroomed, it's carefully planned. Cadogan said:

> When I started with YouTube, I wore a fricking suit and tie. I thought it'd be just like a package for Today Tonight or Sunrise. I quickly lost the suit and got all these stupid T-shirts, and stupid hats. And people's trust in me went up! (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

The looks of these serious youtubers, whatever their style, is part of their concerted effort to create a channel around their personality and build a relationship with their audience. The effort that interviewees go to in order to present authenticity shows that their presentations are performative, and that authenticity, in their eyes, does not mean raw and unfiltered.

Marton Barcza, a Germany-based Hungarian tech youtuber is more haphazard than most. Even so, he pays attention to how he looks because it impacts his ability to build relationships with his audience. Barcza said:

> I don't really think about the way I dress. Maybe that's a privilege that I have by being on YouTube and not on TV. I roughly want to not look bad. I'll shave occasionally, and I'll try not to have something on my face. I'm in a tech niche, and I'm a guy. So, I think not a whole lot of people care about how I look. As for how I present, there's

> always a thought process in my head of how conversational I want to make the video, how personal I want to make it (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

Audience connection motivates practices

All interviewees said audience connection is vital. This imperative lies behind many of the common practices of serious youtubers and most interviewees raised the importance of parasocial relationships in gaining a dedicated audience. Parasocial relationships are nothing new. Writing in the 1950s, Horton and Wohl argued that parasocial relationships occur when an audience member feels an illusion of a "face-to-face relationship" with a public figure (1956, p. 215). They come about when audience members feel as though a celebrity, public personality, or even a fictional character, is part of "the circle of one's peers" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215). Parasocial relationships have a "lack of effective reciprocity" and are "controlled by the performer, and not susceptible of mutual development" (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215).

Studies of parasocial relationships on YouTube audiences have found that they are not intrinsically negative (De Bérail et al., 2019, p. 199). While parasocial relationships with youtubers have been found to contribute to "YouTube addiction" for people suffering social anxiety (De Bérail et al., 2019, p. 200), they also can be positive and helpful (Balcombe & De Leo, 2023). Parasocial relationships have been found to reduce feelings of loneliness (Derrick et al., 2009, p. 354). On YouTube they have also been shown to "result in lower explicit prejudice and intergroup anxiety" (Lotun et al., 2022, p. 10). Interviewees understood parasocial relationships in a way that was in line with the literature, generally expressing them in terms of an audience member feeling that they know, and are somewhat friends with, a youtuber, while that youtuber

has no idea who that audience member is. Interviewees said that audience members having parasocial relationships with youtubers was overall a good thing for a channel.

Earl, from the Jessie Gender channel, said that parasocial relationships are inevitable and that, like any relationship, they can become negative depending on the actions of those involved. Earl said:

> Parasocial relationships are fine and can be a good thing. It's a natural part of creating art that people form parasocial relationships. But the way to remain healthy is to be self-aware of that and not utilising that relationship to grift people (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Tom Nicholas is a UK youtuber who creates videos about politics, history and culture. He emphasised again the desire for youtubers to be authentic and non-corporate when he said that parasocial relationships are unlikely when audience members perceive video content to be the product of a corporation. Nicholas said:

> One of the key aspects of making a YouTube channel work is the perceived relationship between an individual and their audience. And this idea of it being a parasocial relationship, which I think is harder to maintain if people feel like it is a corporate product (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

Practices employed specifically for audience building involve comments and messages. Serious youtubers interact with audience members by liking and replying to audience comments under videos. This is generally done for the first day or two after publishing a video. For many

interviewees more in-depth conversations with audiences happen on their Instagram and closed community platforms such Patreon, a platform where audiences can give regular donations, and Discord, a multimedia platform for community building. Taylor is representative of how most serious youtubers interact with audience members. Taylor said:

> I get a lot of comments on YouTube. I tend to read the odd one, and the top ones. I have more of a back and forth with my Patreon supporters because there's a Discord [server] that you get onto if you sign up for my Patreon. On Instagram as well, there's a bit of a back and forth there. Though I try not to get too close with people (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

While several interviewees made clear that they did not want to develop close relationships with individual audience members, some expressed strong affection for their audience as a whole. As Ryan McBeth, an American youtuber who mostly covers security and armed conflict, said:

> I love my audience. And I also respect my audience. I don't think my audience is stupid. I want them to click the links and look at the facts that I provide and come to their own conclusions. I think that a lot of my audience kind of wishes I was their uncle. That's the way things have gone for me. I've established myself as this guy you really wish you could sit at a table with at a wedding (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

Danylchuk also expressed closeness with her audience:

> I don't like calling my subscribers "subscribers". I rather call them friends. Because I am honestly very grateful that these people follow the updates from Ukraine. I realise for a lot of people, for example, in Australia and New Zealand, people have a choice

> to live their normal life and not to spoil their mind with some negative things. But they choose to watch me consciously. I am very grateful to all of these people for the fact that they come and watch, and they don't forget about Ukrainians (A. Danylchuk, interview with author, December 12, 2023).

While Danylchuk calls her subscribers friends, the relationship remains parasocial. Her subscribers know her based on how she presents herself in her videos. At the same time, she knows very little about the tens of thousands of people who view her videos. Despite this, her experience is an example of how the youtuber connection with audience can be very important and deep, so much so that youtubers learn from their audiences and adjust what they produce. Danylchuk said:

> As the audience grows, I feel more responsibility. First, I started in-depth Sunday episodes. Then I started doing better thumbnails. Actually, my subscribers taught me many things. For example, subscribers said "You need Patreon, we want to be your Patreon supporters". And I said, "What's that?" They taught me a lot of things (A. Danylchuk, interview with author, December 12, 2023).

4.4.1.4 The grammar of youtubers

There are shared norms and practices among serious youtubers, many of which stem from the desire to appear authentic and have a personality-based channel. The shared norms and practices are especially apparent in the presentation and editing of their videos. At first glance, the presentation of some serious youtubers may seem ad hoc, and their sets an afterthought. But this

couldn't be further from the case. As Cadogan, from the channel Auto Expert John Cadogan, said:

> I don't do anything by accident. My entire presentation is an inversion of TV news. It's the exact opposite. I'm in a shitty workshop. I got Darth Vader looking over my shoulder. Darth Vader is the ultimate tragically evil figure. And this is here because the car industry views me almost like the child of Darth Vader because I say exactly what I think, while they've got a whole bunch of sycophant journalists who they lead around by the nose to various events (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

Many very deliberate presentation and aesthetic choices are shared amongst interviewees (Table 3). As Earl from Jessie Gender put it, this is because there is a certain youtuber "grammar" that is generally applied to videos by youtubers, and it differs to that of other media formats (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023). It is telling that Earl's professional and academic background is film. Using terms such as "grammar" and "vocabulary" to explain audio-visual media is not new and it is especially common in film studies (Tecucianu, 2014).

Interviewees made clear that when video content is created for YouTube there are specific considerations related to the YouTube platform. Explaining why he adopts certain practices Deveaux-Isaacs, a political youtuber from The Bahamas, said:

> The medium is the message in many cases. The way that I make my thumbnails, the pacing of my video, the stuff that I speak on, the stuff that I shoot on, it's all extremely tailored to the medium. The colours that I use, trying to highlight the saturation, I do that because I know I'm going to be shown on a small screen. The audio that I use, I

don't put too much bass in it, because I know that that's not going to be transmitted very well through small speakers (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

Table 3: Norms and practices of serious youtubers.

Video post-production	Presentation	Other
Axial cuts/zoom cuts. This is where the frame after a cut is either zoomed in or out.	Casual mode of address/ conversational speaking.	Multiple revenue streams, esp. via AdSense, Patreon and sponsors.
Graphic overlays.	Physical interactions with visual element added later in the editing process, for example pointing.	Replying to comments under videos.
Music (for ambiance or impact).	Medium shot.	Sponsorship spot.
Mistakes/ bloopers included.	Speaking to camera/direct address.	Collaborations with other youtubers.
Sound effects (usually paired with a visual).	Set – regular room.	Calls to action: Commonly for audiences to contribute financially or to like, comment and subscribe.
Jump cuts. An edit with no change in perspective.	Set – wall.	Error correction: New video correcting an older video.
Ken burns effect (zooms on a still image).	Set – shelves in background with assorted paraphernalia and/or books.	Error correction: Pinned comment in the comment section that corrects an error in the related video.
YouTube end-screen template.	Bi-coloured lighting in background.	Error correction: On screen text corrections added in post-production.
YouTube video cards. These are text links that appear at the top of frame in videos.	Bi-sexual lighting in background. A very common combination of blue and purple lighting.	Source transparency: Links to source in video descriptions.
Text on screen, usually to add information, support a joke, highlight information or correct an error.	Casual to smart casual dress (not formal suits).	Source transparency: Sources displayed on screen as it is discussed.
	Physical interactions with visual element, for example pointing, added later in the editing process.	Engaging sensitivity readers.
	Humour: Skits, jokes and memes.	Links to supporting platforms in video descriptions and the

		About section of the channel. Supporting platforms include Patreon, TikTok, Discord, and Substack.
		Thumbnails: Faces with exaggerated facial expression, vibrant and contrasting colours, outlines around people, large text, graphics.

Based on my observations of videos from the 79 youtubers in the sample pool of interviewees, the set of a serious youtuber is typically a regular room in a house, often a study, loungeroom, or bedroom. When there is a specialised space, such as a dedicated recording room, it is often designed in a way to make it feel like a regular room. In some cases, the set is just a wall as a backdrop with some back lighting and decorations behind the presenter. Even when a green screen is used the norm is often still evident, as in some Ryan McBeth videos where the projected scene on the greenscreen is his bedroom. Common set elements include shelves in the background with various items on them. They often hold books, a YouTube subscriber plaque, and assorted items relating, more or less, to the themes of the channel. The presenter is generally centre of frame in a medium shot where only their top half is visible; they are often sitting at a table or desk but can be standing. These presentation practices were confirmed by interviewees as standard and normal. For Boodt, these set considerations are important for projecting authenticity and building audience connection. Boodt said:

> On YouTube, you want to try and have a more direct connection to the viewer. I'm just a guy literally sitting in my kitchen. The thinking is by doing that, and small quirky things, it becomes less clean (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Whatever decisions a youtuber makes regarding set, the main point seems to be for it to not look like a professional, corporate, studio set.

These presentation decisions are deliberate strategies for connecting with audiences. Interviewees expressed that it is harder to connect with audiences if the presentation appears to be from a large company or corporation, irrespective of whether or not it is actually from a large company or corporation. Nicholas, youtuber from the UK, said:

> There is scepticism towards anything that is too polished. And that is related to the idea of this being an enthusiastic individual who's going out and creating art, which feels different to this as a company that is producing video content (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

One way a youtuber makes their videos look less polished is to use jump cuts and axial cuts. They are among the most recognisable elements of youtuber grammar. These edits are easy to make and on YouTube they are often used to hide mistakes, remove dead airtime and connect clips from different takes. However, they are used for much more than that. They are used in ways that differ greatly from practices in film and television. Earl from Jessie Gender said:

> Jump cuts aren't often used in the Hollywood studio editing system. Hollywood tends to like you to forget that you are watching a film and just be sucked into the world. Whereas jump cuts will make you think about the artifice of what you're watching. That's how film schools think about it. But on YouTube, there is a slightly different language with jump cuts because they are more baked into the way video essays are done. It's part of the grammar of YouTube editing (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Boodt said these kinds of edits maintain audience interest:

> Jump cuts obviously are to do with retention. It could just be my face reading scripts, but no one's going to watch that. On YouTube, you have to find a way to get your audience engaged. Jump cuts are one of the ways. You want to find tempo. You want to speed up, you want to slow down, you want to make people feel something (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Jump and axial cuts used for tempo means that more cuts are made than are necessary to simply hide mistakes. US youtuber Amanda Hootman said:

> One of the norms that I use a lot while I'm editing is really tight cutting. So, the way I'm talking right now, I'm taking a lot of pauses for thought, I'm using a lot of ums and ahs. If I were to edit this in a video, I would cut all of that really, really tight. So there are jumps. I might do some zoom in zoom outs, in order for it to flow in a way that is snappy or funny. And the pauses I leave in are deliberate. I also go through and do more cuts than necessary because there's a kind of punchiness to this style of YouTube. I think that appeals to audiences (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

Sound matters too. In addition to visual presentation considerations and video editing, a lot of thought is put into the audio production and editing. Interviewees said that good, clear, audio is essential, and music and sound effects can be used to engage audiences. Boodt said:

> If you take the time to draw out an idea with the music under it, then people start to feel something, and that has an impact. It's about retention, but also value for the

> viewer to have something else than just reading an article or book (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Boodt added that sound design, graphics, varied cuts, and the spoken word are all important aspects of YouTube videos:

> With sound effects, narration and animation, you create a compelling thing that people want to keep watching. Retention isn't only achieved by rapid cutting. Silence, slowing down can be really helpful too (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Practices around youtuber grammar are also found at the script-writing stage of preproduction. Grady Hillhouse, an engineering youtuber from the US, talked about the very deliberate way he writes scripts. He said:

> I never wrote for a TV show or a movie or anything so it's hard to say for sure, but the writing is very YouTube specific because it tries to keep you hanging. We spend a tonne of time of thinking about transitioning topics and how the flow of information keeps your attention. It's not written like a professional report. It's not written like a college essay. It's written in a way that's really meant to keep you wondering what's next the entire time throughout the video (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Publishing videos on YouTube is more than just creating videos. Other elements surrounding the video on the platform contribute to shaping the practices of youtubers. These elements include titles, descriptions and thumbnails. Titles and thumbnails are often worked on in the very

early stages of pre-production, before filming and in tandem with script writing. Thumbnails often include exaggerated facial expressions, large text, vibrant colours and a coloured outline around people (Figure 7). Schasfoort said:

> Titles and thumbnails are really important. A title needs to be very catchy and intriguing. Similarly, with thumbnails if you screw them up, it could be that your video gets 30,000 views, whereas if you change it to something more interesting, it gets 300,000 views. I take that into account before I make the video, because then they're more in line. Thumbnails are front and centre to my thinking (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

And Boodt said:

> Thumbnails are half the video. I should be spending more time on them because if people don't click them, no one is going to see it (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).



Figure 7: Thumbnail norms (Tabani [Zaid Tabani], 2026).

Leaving bloopers and minor errors in published videos is another norm for serious youtubers. Leaving in bloopers is often a strategy for audience connection and creating authenticity. Earl said:

> I'll screw up a line while I'm filming naturally, but I'll leave it in the edit. The reason I do that is because I think it allows me to have a distinct style, where I'm breaking that fourth wall. I mean, we're always breaking the fourth wall on YouTube, but like breaking the wall beyond the fourth wall, like trying to showcase me as a person beyond the presented version of myself (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Leaving in minor errors also has a practical explanation. Hillhouse said:

> The audience on YouTube is willing to forgive a lot more than a TV or a cinema audience. When you look at the resources we have to spend on a video in terms of time and dollars, not much is going toward making things look nice or making sure every shot is colour corrected, or other fine details (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

The youtuber practices identified in this chapter are considered norms by interviewees and they include using a regular room for the set, jump cuts, having items and lights in the background of the shot, and leaving in errors. One way these practices spread is through observing and imitating other YouTube content creators, especially more established ones. Cahal Moran from the channel Unlearning Economics said:

> The truth is I've just copied other youtubers with my own tastes sprinkled in. I've got the bookcase in the background, which is a standard pretentious academic thing to

> do. I've looked into lighting and things like that. I've got two big, proper studio lights that shine on me, and I've experimented with where to put them, but I know that you need to have one straight at you so that people can see you, but you need some shadow on one side of your face. It's also really good to have an actual light in the shot, so that people can see the light and that shows that you're in front of it. It gives them depth perception. I've looked into all of that kind of stuff. But **I'd say it's a pretty standard youtuber setup**, right? I've got my mic in front of me. I've got lighting. I'm just in my living room or my office or my bedroom or whatever. I don't think there's anything massively unique about it (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

As these norms and practices become more established, they are also being reinforced as creators look to one another for tips and tricks. Interviewees across the board said elements of this grammar include speaking to camera, jump cuts and a personal and conversational presentation style. Lighting and set design are part of this youtuber grammar, as is editing, sound design, thumbnail design, and even deliberately leaving in mistakes. Earl said, "Coloured lighting generally is part of the grammar of YouTube. And the popularity of bisexual lighting specifically is just that people seem to like the blue and purple combo" (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023). The specific grammar of youtubers allows a creator to better connect with audiences and project a sense of authenticity.

4.4.2 Finding 2: Serious youtubers take ethics seriously

The second major finding in this chapter is that interviewees take ethics very seriously. They value high ethical standards and, notably, operating at such standards is considered to be essential to maintaining their credibility and connection to their audience. This section details

how youtubers work in a de facto regulatory environment where YouTube requires youtubers to adhere to several layers of the company's official policies, terms and conditions. It also enforces its regulations through demonetisation, geoblocking, and channel deletion. Interviewees take YouTube's terms and conditions very seriously. Moreover, this section shows that interviewees go well beyond what is required of them, especially in the area of adherence to factual accuracy and source transparency. This chapter also has found that interviewees are broadly supportive of a youtuber code of ethics. However, interviewees expressed concerns that they suffer from ethical double standards where they receive more scrutiny than more traditional media producers. Finally, this section ends by highlighting how interviewees' ethical considerations include their business practices.

Regulation by YouTube

YouTube has several layers of rules and standards for users of the platform, and they are more serious the larger a youtuber becomes. Rules increase in number and seriousness when a youtuber becomes large enough to join the YouTube Partner Program in which YouTube shares advertising revenue with content creators (YouTube, n.d.-b). These terms, conditions and rules are set and enforced by YouTube, and in this way, YouTube acts as a de facto regulator. Indeed, interviewees said they feel heavily regulated by YouTube. Breaching the rules comes with consequences which include demonetisation, video removal, and account termination (Google Support, n.d.-b). Audience members can also make official complaints against individual youtubers in a number of areas that include defamation, copyright, privacy, trademarks, factually accuracy and inappropriate content (Google Support, n.d.-c, n.d.-d, n.d.-e, n.d.-h, n.d.-i, n.d.-g).

Interviewees certainly feel as though the platform's policies act as regulations akin to industry standards or codes of conduct. Deveaux-Isaacs said:

> There're a bunch of different guidelines that you have to follow just to make content on YouTube and more guidelines that you have to follow in order to monetise your content. Once you get into the creator program, you consent to particular terms and conditions to create on the platform. And that is, in effect, kind of a code of ethics that you consent to as a person that is eligible to make money on this platform. And then you have to meet another level. Every video is checked by an automated system, or a human reviewer, in order to determine if your video is able to make money on the platform. Then you have another set of community guidelines that you have to abide by as a creator just exist on the platform. So, let's say you broadcast a shooting, or suicide, on YouTube, that will probably get you taken off the platform. So, there's a coterie of different guidelines (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

While YouTube's rules are considered to be onerous, they are taken seriously by interviewees. British youtuber Taylor said:

> There are rules around what you can show. Like, if I was talking about some sort of political thing, and there's footage of violence, I have to be careful of what I actually show. You can't show anything too graphic. I wouldn't even show a fist fight or anything like that (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

YouTube started as a place to "broadcast yourself" where the idea was that regular people uploaded amateur video of themselves with minimal formal checks and balances (Jarrett, 2008).

But for serious youtubers in the 2020s, the production process increasingly resembles more traditional media in terms of the number of checks on content before it is published. Deveaux-Isaacs said:

> YouTube is getting the same restrictions as a traditional show would where you have a showrunner and you have all these execs, you have shooting days, and you have edits and different look throughs. On YouTube, we youtubers like to just move fast and break things. That's our mantra. So, when you tell us that now we have to submit a first screening of our video to our ad rep so that they could see to make sure that it fits their guidelines. That slows down the process. It can take days, sometimes a week. And then you have YouTube's own internal system that determines if your video is suitable for ad revenue on their platform (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

The automated systems reviewing videos are universally considered to be onerous and heavy-handed by interviewees. Demonetisation, the suspension of AdSense revenue, is a common issue. If YouTube's automatic system deems a video to be inappropriate, an appeal can be made where a human from YouTube reviews the video Hootman said:

> I hate the YouTube content ID systems. They have an automated system for seeing if you use any copyrighted material. It'll demonetise your videos right away if you have copyrighted material, even if it's fair use. You can always dispute it, and then a human person will look at it. Usually, they will release the copyright claim (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

Copyright is not the only reason automated systems may penalise a youtuber. Interviewees said that the algorithm is sensitive to certain topics as they are not "advertiser friendly". Often these are exactly the topics that serious youtubers are publishing videos about. Hootman said:

> Another content check is about some of the serious stuff that we talk about. Using words like sex, sexual assault, and genocide, will get your videos demonetised. Demonetisation mean you don't get any of YouTube's ad revenue. But also, they won't push content that is not deemed advertiser friendly. So demonetised videos tend to get fewer views. And that's the most upsetting thing, the lack of views, especially if it's something really important that you've worked really hard on (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

If independent serious youtubers do produce public interest journalism, then, considering the importance of topics such as sexual assault and genocide, YouTube's regulations could arguably be working against the public interest.

Trying to stay in the good books with YouTube's demonetisation algorithms influences video production, sometimes in ways that audiences do not like. Hootman said:

> I'm working on a video right now about digital whisper networks where I talk about rape and sexual assault a lot. I'm going to try to bleep out everything that I can for the YouTube version and upload an unbleeped version of it to Patreon (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

When she does this, she receives backlash from audiences on YouTube where people often accuse her of being patronising and not treating the audience as adults who can deal with confronting words (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024). However, Hootman

said that she bleeps out what she thinks are blacklisted words by YouTube because if she does not then YouTube will suppress her video in the algorithm and because of this she said, "it's difficult to discuss some of the darker topics that are very often important to discuss" (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

The algorithm is not just sensitive to the words youtubers say, but also to the footage that they display. Dikarev, from the Canada-based channel called The Russia Dude, said this creates a double-standard. While youtubers are subject to onerous restrictions, mainstream news media organisations are far less restricted. Dikarev said:

> I have to be very careful what I show and what I say because of the censorship. I mean, this is pretty ridiculous. Because *The Guardian*, CNN, they are able to show, with limitations, explosions, they're able to show combat activities. But as soon as I do it, or other creators do it, our videos get flagged. Or we just get noticed by YouTube's algorithm and the video gets locked down and restricted (A. Dikarev, interview with author, October 25, 2023).

Cadogan, reflecting on his decades of experience working for traditional news media companies, compares YouTube to traditional media. He found that both youtubers and traditional media workers have rules they need to follow, however, he does not speak positively about the way in which YouTube administers its rules. Cadogan said:

> Every time you're a journalist, doesn't matter if you're on radio or television or in print, you're in a box. And the box is made of rules. And the rules have boundaries. YouTube's no different. There's a whole set of rules. And they're administered by an

> AI, which is like being administered by an insane human who you can never talk to (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

Self-imposed standards

As well as the rules and standards imposed and enforced by YouTube, interviewees are also subject to self-imposed ethical standards, which go further. By aiming to act ethically, in the ways they describe, serious youtubers attempt to build integrity and trustworthiness into their brands. It becomes a way to gain and hold a dedicated audience, even if ethical practice, such as adherence to factual accuracy, sometimes leads to lower video views.

When asked about ethics, interviewees universally noted three key standards: factual accuracy; transparency of sources; and editorial independence. To serious youtubers, these are core ethical issues. Other ethical issues that were raised in interviews were: the motivation to inform and educate; the protection of human sources; and the minimisation of harm, for example by protecting privacy. Another ethical issue raised was the need for sensitivity readers. A sensitivity reader is someone from a community, often a minority community, that is the subject of a video who reads the video script before production and gives advice on the treatment of their community so to avoid inaccuracy, harm, or offence (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023). Interviewees voluntarily impose many of the ethical standards, and accompanying practices on themselves. For instance, there is no YouTube policy, and certainly no government regulation, that requires hyperlinks to sources to be included in video descriptions, or for errors to be corrected in pinned comments of videos. However, such hyperlinks and error corrections are common.

Many interviewees said that if they compromised their ethics, such as by being inaccurate or by producing sensationalised content, their videos would probably perform better in terms of views. However, they would lose their core audience. While making money is necessary to survive, getting rich is not the stated driving force of serious youtubers. Schasfoort said, there are a lot of successful videos on YouTube which are "inaccurate and sloppily researched" and that "YouTube encourages clickbaityness and lazy content because all that matters is views, right? That's how you make money. There's a strong incentive" (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

For some, their ethical standards go beyond any journalist code of ethics, for example, by using sensitivity readers. That some serious youtubers engage sensitivity readers was a surprising finding. Earl had the most formalised processes surrounding sensitivity readers. Earl said:

> I think about ethics a lot. I think it's very important that I discuss issues that relate to being Black in America or being a person of colour or other things that I cannot speak authoritatively on. When that happens, I bring in a person from that background to speak in the video. Failing that, I try to at least have them write something for me, and I at least go out and read stuff from them. I also include quotes or clips from people that are not my background. And I always get a sensitivity reader from whatever group that I'm talking about (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

In Australia, the practice of employing sensitivity readers is not found in codes and standards such as the MEAA journalist codes of ethics or in ACMA-registered codes. The only exception to this is the SBS Code of Practice which includes something akin to sensitivity readers, though even here it is limited to engaging with Indigenous Australians. In the code, a protocol requires SBS "content makers" to "engage with Indigenous Australians in the making of content about Indigenous Australians" (SBS, 2021).

Accuracy of facts and transparency of sources

Factual accuracy was raised by all interviewees as an important ethical consideration. Michalski, from the politics-focused Australian channel Punter's Politics, said, "my ethics are definitely about trying to be as evidence based as possible" (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024). Accuracy and transparency are also seen as valuable for being accountable to audiences. Taylor from münecat said, "A lot of YouTubers don't bother listing their sources. But I want to make sure that I always do. And people thank me for them all the time" (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

Moran is a typical example. Accuracy and error correction are core parts of his ethical framework. For Moran, a common way to correct errors is by posting a pinned comment under the video. If the error is large enough serious youtubers will post an entire new video to set the record straight. These error corrections are voluntary and not required by YouTube or other media regulators. Moran said:

> An ethical consideration is obviously just doing your research and trying to fact-check yourself and be truthful. A lot of research goes into my videos. That doesn't mean there aren't mistakes, of course there are. But most of them aren't major. If there is a major error, I'll post something about it (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

In addition to factual accuracy, interviewees view transparent sources as an important ethical issue. To be transparent with sources, interviewees engage in practices such as putting graphics on screen showing the sources as they are mentioned, linking to sources in the video description,

and including a link in the description to a document with the transcript that has embedded links to the sources used in the video. Michalski said:

> I always want to model a healthy kind of engagement with information. That's why I'm always saying, "Here are my citations. You can have a look, correct me but provide your citations." I'm trying to elevate the level of discourse on YouTube. My ethics are that I'm not going to say anything that's not true. I don't want to be a commentator who just speaks confidently about shit they know nothing about (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

Youtuber code of ethics and double standards

Interviewees were asked about their opinions on a hypothetical youtuber code of ethics. Most interviewees liked the idea, at least in principle. Zoe Burke, a US based youtuber said, "I think it would be nice to have a code of ethics laid out. So, it's not just me relying on my own judgment. Having some sort of external, agreed upon thing would actually be a wonderful thing for the platform" (Z. Burke, interview with author, October 23, 2023). Hootman said:

> Some kind of youtuber code of ethics is something that a lot of youtubers would get on board with, especially in the fallout of the big Hbomberguy plagiarism video.[3] We do need to be talking about how we need to have a more standardised method of operating, we need a code of ethics, we need to have norms around that (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

[3] In December 2023, Hbomberguy published a four-hour long video exposing alleged plagiarism of several prominent youtubers. This exposé ended the careers of several youtubers.

Interviewees said adherence to a code could entail verification, or algorithmic privilege in the same way major news organisations currently receive in the "News" tab on YouTube. Hootman said:

> I think it would be great if there was a way to verify a creator who's creating educational content or newsworthy content. And the verification process would be a way of combating the massive amounts of misinformation that exist on YouTube (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

However, several interviewees expressed concern about how a youtuber code would be created and by whom. Earl said:

> Some kind of youtuber code of ethics would be great. The only thing is, if you do that, make sure to include marginalised people, because I can easily see a code of ethics being done to uphold the status quo without being willing to hear marginalised voices. […] It'd have to be done separate from YouTube. I would definitely not trust YouTube the company to do it (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Not all interviewees thought a youtuber code of ethics was realistic. Some expressed strong pessimism at the idea. Barcza said, "it's pie in the sky" (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

For many interviewees, scepticism around a youtubers code of ethics was related to a strong feeling that there is a double standard applied to them compared to other media creators, especially journalists. Boodt said:

> There are some people that want a lot of journalistic integrity from youtubers. Where in a Netflix documentary or a newspaper article are you going to find sources listed with footnotes? You won't. But there is this wish for youtubers to do exactly that, to make an academic paper of their video (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Deveaux-Isaacs said that youtubers like him are scrutinised more than people who work in traditional news media. He said:

> If I could be sort of snotty with it, I would think that we probably have more T's and C's, boxes to tick, and people to check with at this point than some print journalism, and some tabloid journalism. I mean, I go the grocery store and in the checkout line I pass magazines that are far more salacious, that have covers with far more exaggerated facial features, and of people with extremely hateful language. So what standards are they meeting? (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

That Deveaux-Isaacs compares his content, which largely covers topics such racism and systemic injustices, to tabloid magazines is an example of the confused situation around what news media is and what standards different types of news media should adhere to.

This perceived double standard is felt keenly as interviewees consider themselves to be knowledgeable in terms of ethics and broad professional standards. When asked about ethics regarding their videos, most said they often rely on ethics related to their education and professional experience. As a cohort, the interviewees were highly educated with 20% holding a PhD and 35% a master's degree (Appendix G). For example, Hillhouse is guided by professional engineering ethics (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023). Schasfoort said he

leans into his academic experience for ethical guidance. Schasfoort also and directly contrasted "good youtubers" with news media that lacks transparency in their sources. Schasfoort said:

> Obviously, it would be nice if youtubers had journalistic training. I've tried to learn on the job. I hope my academic background somewhat compensates there. But yeah, people learn on the job, and I think there are some quite good youtubers out there who sometimes even have higher standards than journalists. Actually, I was surprised at how many journalistic articles don't have sources (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

Ethics and Business

Serious youtubers stressed their deep commitment to editorial independence. This was expressed as a key ethical issue. The primary risk to editorial independence that interviewees consistently raised was potential pressure from sponsors. Traditionally, editorial independence has been a key issue in journalism which has resulted in institutional norms such as news media organisations building a "wall of separation" between journalists and editors on one side, and those in the business and advertising on the other (Artemas et al., 2018, p. 1004). In practice, these "walls" vary in their effectiveness depending on the media organisation and the medium. There is significant research to show that the wall of separation is crumbling online, with the distinction between editorial and advertising increasingly blurred on the internet. Ferrer-Conill et al. produced one such study which found that there is often a "blurring of editorial and commercial content" with "native advertising" on news websites and conscious attempts are made to "camouflage ads as much as possible" and disclose advertising only to the most minimal of extents (Ferrer-Conill et al., 2021, p. 946).

For youtubers, editorial independence issues can arise when channels have video sponsors. Interviews revealed that sponsorships are a major revenue stream for most serious youtubers and, when they have sponsors, youtubers are required to adhere to relevant YouTube policies. As an example of a YouTube rule regarding this area, sponsorships, paid product placements and endorsements must be disclosed to YouTube at the time of video upload (Google Support, n.d.-a). This disclosure is done by checking a box in the video upload process.

Walls between content and sponsored content are expected, by YouTube and by viewers. Interviewees were keenly aware of YouTube requirements around sponsorships. They were also not blind to potential risks to editorial independence of sponsorships. In ways that resemble the walls of separation ideal in traditional news media, interviewees described how they separate sponsored content from their own content. An important aspect of this is audience perceptions. Interviewees consider themselves to be ethical, and they want to be seen as being ethical. Again, interviewees go beyond the requirements set by YouTube. Engineering youtuber Hillhouse said:

> I want editorial control over what I make. I don't want anyone to ever think, "Oh, you were paid to say that." So, we'll never accept a sponsorship from an engineering consulting firm, or anyone involved in the civil engineering field at all, because I think it's a conflict of interest, even if I don't give them editorial control over anything we say. It's just doesn't look right (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

In many cases, the sponsor does not see the video they sponsor before it is published; they just want to view the "ad read" which is the section of the video promoting the sponsor's product or service. Interviewees felt that this practice allows them to maintain editorial independence over their videos and avoid sponsor influence. Taylor said:

> The sponsors that come to me have generally been aware of my past content, and they've come to me because they like it. They have trust in me that I'm not going to upload something highly offensive. They're not even interested in the subject of the video. All they want to see before the video goes live is the section that I've made for them. They'll sign it off. And then I'll plop it in the video (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

Some interviewees discussed problems that can occur when working with sponsors and how a careful reading of contracts can avoid issues such as potential compromise of editorial independence. Youtubers need to be aware of issues around editorial control in sponsorship agreements before contracts are signed. Burke said:

> Sponsors have no influence on my content. That is one of the things that I always make sure to look for in all the contracts that they send. If a sponsor says that I'm not allowed to talk about a political party and their policies, then I'm not going to work with them. I think that's unacceptable (Z. Burke, interview with author, October 23, 2023).

When asked whether sponsorships had the potential to influence his work, Michalski said:

> They fully could, and that's why I'm probably cautious with the types of brands I would work with. I mean, I highly doubt gas companies or gambling companies are going to be approaching me. I wouldn't take their money anyway (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

Tech youtuber Barcza was also aware of potential conflicts of interest in his videos, especially when he reports on commercial products. He said he often reflects on how receiving test products may have potential influence on what he does. He takes steps to reduce potential influence; and he works to build editorial walls. Barcza said:

> I have ground rules. One is that I want to have a very clear separation between the companies that sponsor me and the actual coverage that I do. I declare whenever somebody pays me or when somebody invites me to a trip. I also have a clear separation between content and sponsored content. I don't take sponsorships from companies that I cover critically. So, I don't have a Samsung sponsorship or an Apple sponsorship or Microsoft sponsorship, because I talk about them too much for me to be able to separate that (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

A related issue concerns receiving free products rather than payment, including for the purposes of posting a review. On this, Barcza said:

> There is a grey zone about non-monetary compensation, especially in tech. It gets quite weird quite fast. And I think in an old-school journalism ethics sense, much of what tech YouTube does would not pass at all (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

Barcza said that declining free review products would put him at a disadvantage in terms of producing timely and newsworthy content. Barcza said:

> I accept products for reviewing. I will not accept money from the company, but I'll accept a review unit. Oftentimes, the review unit gets sent out before they're available for purchase. If I want to have a video about something at a time when anybody will

> be interested in it at all, it's kind of the only reasonable way to do it (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

Taking this product review "grey zone" into consideration was an issue for several interviewees. Cadogan, from the channel Auto Expert John Cadogan, who was an experienced motoring journalists before becoming a youtuber, is very familiar with potential impacts of corporations offering products for review. According to Cadogan, motoring journalists who work for media organisations that accept advertising from carmakers, receive many free products and perks, including loan cars, first class plane tickets, stays in 5-star hotels, and being "wined and dined" (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023). Cadogan said that if the journalist is "a bit critical" or writes about a car "in a way the carmaker doesn't approve of" then carmakers will "talk to you about it" and say that loan cars and expensive trips will become unavailable if critical writing continues: "the taps get turned off to some extent" (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023). Cadogan said:

> If you keep doing it, then the car company's commercial director, or marketing manager, or whatever, will meet the director of your publisher and talk about "getting this clown in line otherwise we're pulling out ads." And this could be a million-dollar deal (J. Cadogan, interview with author, October 6, 2023).

Here there is a contrast. While Barcza compared himself unfavourably to "old-school journalism" in ethical terms, Cadogan identified the ethical shortcomings of this old school advertiser-focused model. Cadogan's account made clear that issues of editorial independence are not confined to youtubers and their videos.

Understanding the level of scrutiny they are under, and the perceived double standard, some channels forgo the sponsor revenue stream entirely in a conscious effort to be "above suspicion" in terms of editorial influence by sponsors. The channels friendlyjordies and The West Report are the two examples of this among my interviewee cohort.

4.4.3 Finding 3: Serious youtubers run serious businesses

The third major finding in this chapter is that interviewees run serious businesses which allow them to make a living producing videos on YouTube. Their businesses employ a YouTube-focused business model that includes multiple revenue streams and often teams of workers. Interviewees made clear that they consider YouTube to be the best platform for a business based on online video. However, they also made clear that being dependent on a digital platform comes with significant risks.

The youtuber business model: diverse revenue streams

Interviewees all said they operate YouTube focused businesses where the primary product is their videos. The defining feature of this business model is that it has multiple and divers revenue streams. The core revenue streams are from sponsors, audience contributions, and a cut of advertising income that YouTube receives from placing ads on videos (Figure 8). Nicholas said:

> The youtuber business model is a tripod. There is AdSense money, which is the money that comes from adverts that get automatically placed on the videos by YouTube. There is Patreon, which is people deciding to support my work through regular

pledges. And then sponsorships where we work more directly with sponsors. Those three things together keep it going (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

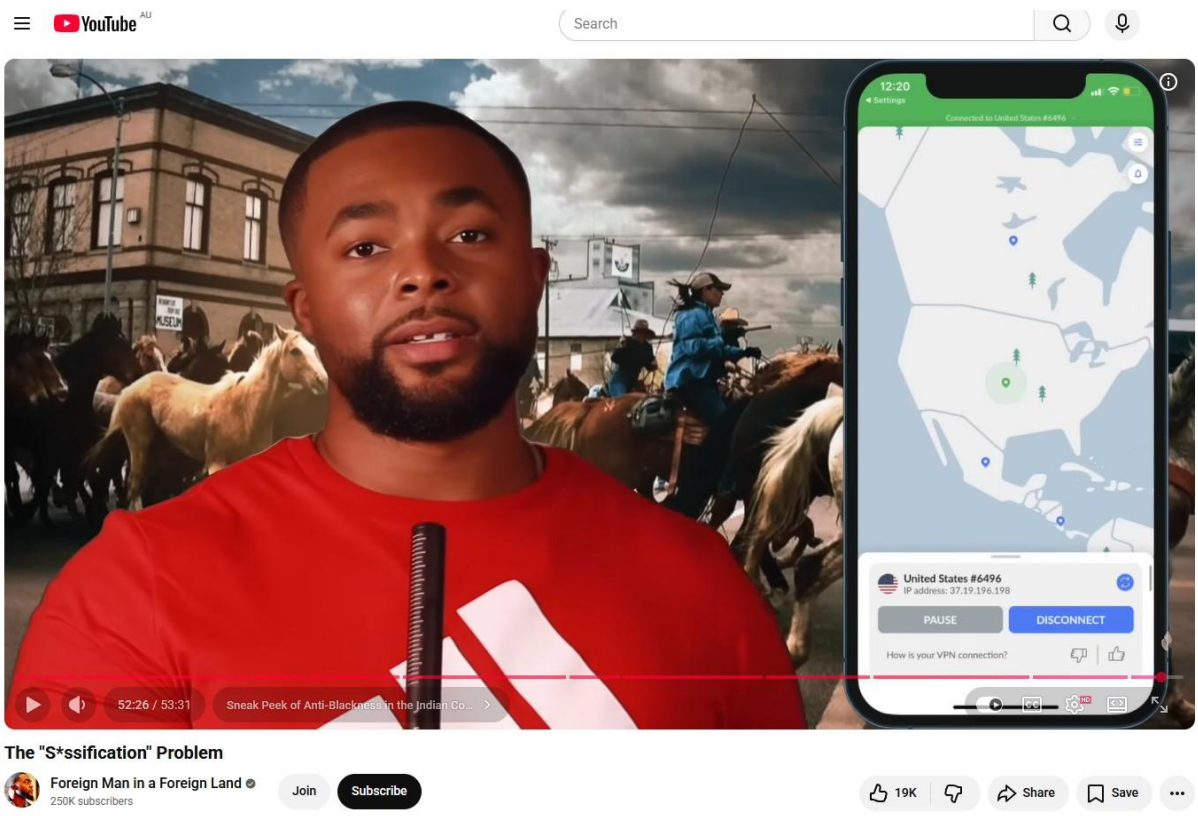

Figure 8: Sponsor segment for VPN company in video by Deveaux-Isaacs [Foreign Man in a Foreign Land] (2023).

As well as the three main revenue streams, serious youtubers often have a number of smaller revenue streams that vary depending on the youtuber. Explaining his specific version of the youtuber business model, Hillhouse said:

> The two big pillars of revenue for us are AdSense and sponsor revenue. In most of our videos we do a post-video ad roll spot integrated into the video and sponsors pay for that. And all that stuff is negotiated through an agency. We also have some syndication stuff. So, the videos go on Nebula, which is a paid streaming platform. Some of them go on LinkedIn Learning, which is educational, and there is some

> merchandise revenue. Patreon is also a decent revenue stream (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Another key aspect of a youtuber business model is that it includes staff or contractors, which make up the largest expense. While each serious youtuber built their channel around themselves and their personality, this does not mean they are operating alone, especially as their audience grows. Earl said, "naturally, when you grow bigger you have to involve more people" (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023). Numerous job types are involved in the teams of serious youtubers, including researcher, video editor and thumbnail artist.

The degree to which team members are acknowledged or visible in a channel's video content varies from youtuber to youtuber. There is a tension between a channel built around a single "non-corporate" personality and the realities of operating a growing business that requires employees. Nicholas said:

> A lot of people assume there is one person behind each channel, and I think different creators reveal more or less about how many people are working behind the scenes. Lots of creators will have co-writers, researchers, music composers, camera people or editing teams (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

While a youtuber may have begun their channel as a solo operator, interviewees said recruiting extra sets of hands, whether as employees or contractors, is necessary to maintain quality as the business expands. Boodt said that he is "trying to invest" in his YouTube business and to do this he has hired editors, animators, and research assistants (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

YouTube is the best platform for a creator business based on serious topics

The serious youtubers interviewed for this chapter are media professionals who operate small businesses based around a YouTube channel. Interviewees unanimously said that YouTube, for a number of reasons, is the best digital platform for their businesses. Taylor said, "YouTube is just the most obvious place to put videos, isn't it? It's got the most reach out of any platform" (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023). Michael West, who had decades of journalism experience before he started his channel, said that YouTube has significantly more reach than his news website. West said, "It's a natural thing when you can get 10 to 20 thousand views on a video, you've got to be on YouTube to augment the 5,000 hits a story gets on your website" (M. West, interview with author, June 15, 2023). However, he said he acknowledges the value of YouTube very reluctantly because he resents being dependent on a digital platform (M. West, interview with author, June 15, 2023).

The video format and platform features of YouTube allow serious youtubers to create their preferred long-form content. Boodt said, "On YouTube you have some time to tell the story. To really set out an argument. You just really can't do it on other social media" (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023). Interviewees said that they primarily use platforms such as TikTok and Instagram for marketing purposes, while YouTube is the core platform for building a dedicated audience and earning a living. Barcza from the channel TechAltar, said:

> YouTube has done very well with long form content. I feel like the culture of TikTok and Instagram Reels and definitely YouTube Shorts, is that everything has to be short and fast. And I find it really difficult to do any meaningful exploration of a topic with that kind of attention span. On YouTube it makes sense to have animations and a

> higher production quality that I enjoy making and I enjoy watching (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

The size and utility of YouTube, for both audiences and creators, is important. Interviewees are aware that it is one of the most popular platforms for audiences to find news and information. In both the Australian and global contexts YouTube is up to twice as popular for news consumption compared to TikTok (Egan et al., 2026, p. 21; Park et al., 2026b, p. 117; Park et al., 2025b, p. 93). Tabani, a US youtuber who uses freestyle rap to present news on YouTube, stressed the importance of YouTube for looking up news and information. Tabani said:

> If there is a video that you've heard of, you're going to search for it on YouTube. If something happens, you're going to search for information on YouTube. It's a great big video resource tool for everyone. There are creators who you've never heard of making a living off this platform. Plenty of people don't know who I am and I'm making money off it (Z. Tabani, interview with author, January 17, 2024).

Interviewees across the board viewed YouTube as being the best platform to make a living on. Nicholas said, "At a mercenary level, YouTube has worked out how to monetise content in a good way. I think other platforms I would find just as fulfilling. I just wouldn't be able to make it work financially" (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023). Many interviewees said that building a worthwhile career around another digital platforms was not realistic. Deveaux-Isaacs said:

> You can definitely make a career on YouTube. YouTube is the best when it comes to reach, from a money standpoint, and also being able to create a career that allows for nuance (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

Being able to make a living wage is an important motivating factor for making YouTube a priority, even when a youtuber has a big following on other platforms. Michalski, who first became popular on Instagram and has twice as many followers on Instagram compared to his YouTube subscribers, said:

> YouTube has a better format. It's slightly long form. People are there to listen and learn a little bit more. And it just pays. Whereas Instagram just pays you with followers, which helps feed everything, but it's not a direct monetary incentive. YouTube is my main priority because it's the one that actually pays (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

All interviewees stressed the primacy of YouTube. That does not mean that they do not have a presence on other platforms. However, other platforms are secondary to YouTube. They play a supporting role. Several interviewees use TikTok and Instagram as part of their brand awareness and marketing. Patreon and Substack are used by interviewees as a platform to allow financial contributions from audience members. Off-YouTube engagement with audience members often happens on Patreon, Discord or Instagram. While interviewees operate on multiple platforms, one thing is clear, YouTube is only platform that is considered essential for financial security.

Filling a gap in the market

YouTube is not just the most financially lucrative platform. Interviewees also noted the audience demand for quality, trustworthy information on YouTube and said they are trying to meet that demand. Michalski said:

> I think I'm delivering something that people like. There is a market gap in Australia. America has lots of youtubers doing this in the political landscape. Whereas in Australia, there're two of them, there's BoyBoy and friendlyjordies, and then me, and then a few other smaller guys like Swollen Pickles. And then you are kind of at the end of Australian political youtubers (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

It is not just in Australia where there is a gap in the market. Schasfoort said:

> I think it's just a matter of demand. There is a demand for journalism type content on YouTube. If journalists don't fill it up themselves, other people will fill it up. (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

Minimal support from YouTube

Interviewees consider YouTube to be the best video platform for independent creator businesses. However, most feel a lack of support from YouTube the company. Once a youtuber becomes big enough, they are often allocated a support person from YouTube, though exactly when this happens is inconsistent according to the experiences of interviewees. Additionally, very few interviewees found their support person to be helpful. For example, Taylor met up with her YouTube support person only once and found the experience wanting. She said:

> Honestly, it just seemed very corporate and not personalised to me at all. I don't think the woman had really watched my videos or really knew anything about my channel at all. Basically, she was trying to push to me the features that YouTube is trying to push (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

Moran, who at the time of his interview had a sizable channel of well over 100,000 subscribers, was asked about his relationship with YouTube. Moran said, "I don't have one. The only relationship I have with them, arguably, is when they try to strike down my videos for copyright claims. I have never really had contact with them at all" (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

Dikarev, The Russian Dude, is scathing:

> YouTube does not care about creators at all. When a video is demonetised, you appeal to them, and you can never reach a helpful person. Absolutely never. I mean it. They never tell you what caused your video to be demonetised. They know exactly which part caused the demonetisation, but they never tell you. And this is extremely bad because as a creator, you cannot know what caused this so you can't make your video better next time. The support is absolutely zero out of 10, horrible (A. Dikarev, interview with author, October 25, 2023).

Among interviewees, Bahamian political youtuber Deveaux-Isaacs was the only one who was positive about his relationship with YouTube, and he is aware that this is unusual. He said:

> Very weirdly, I've been able to get access to very intimate parts of YouTube. I say that literally as an anomaly. People that look like me don't always get access to executives at YouTube. And people that make the type of content that I make also don't get access to YouTube. In fact, they are typically people that YouTube would like to disassociate with. My relationship with YouTube itself, I'm happy to say that I actually do have one, I do have people inside YouTube that I can call, that I can message, and

> they will reply. I think it is charm and networking for the most part (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

Risks to the youtuber business model

The youtuber business model provides a way for creators to make a living on the platform. However, this business model is not without risks. A big part of this lies in the "uneven power relations between the platform and creators who have limited possibilities for demanding redress" (Rieder et al., 2023, p. 4). This is evident when interviewees discussed being subject to YouTube's terms and conditions while receiving little support from the company. Channels are constantly at risk of receiving copyright strikes, demonetisation, and restrictions on video promotion by the YouTube algorithm. Algorithmic decisions such as these on YouTube can lead to lower views and thus, lower AdSense revenue, and they can be hard to reverse.

Job insecurity is an acknowledged risk. While serious youtubers operate small businesses, their success is dependent on the YouTube platform. Rather than being employees or even business owners, Moran placed the work that youtubers do in the same category as gig workers. Moran said:

> It's really bad to be participating in employing gig workers. But then I suppose I'm in a type of gig work as well. Creators don't have proper jobs. We don't have that reliable employment. And you're at the mercy of the algorithm. And if you release a video that doesn't get viewed that much, then it can be on a knife's edge. You've got to keep growing to keep your footing. Then you employ freelance editors, and my experience is that they tend to diversify. They'll be editing for quite a few different youtubers, so

> actually in a way they are in a more stable situation than youtubers. But that that doesn't mean it wouldn't be good if everyone was just employed on reliable contracts (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

Another risk that interviewees identified was audience capture, which is when youtubers pander to their audiences for financial gain. This is a particular risk for the serious youtuber interviewees, given their claims to editorial independence and factual accuracy. Audience capture can compromise both independence and accuracy if the focus shifts towards whatever it takes to attract eyeballs and make money. While this might increase revenue in the short term, the risk lies in the destruction of the personal brands where trust and authenticity are paramount. Michalski said:

> Conspiracy theorists who start quite moderate see where the money is, and they start to tailor their thumbnails and all their topics towards what gets more clicks. And then they build an echo chamber around them where their audience sort of controls them. That's one way of losing integrity. Audience capture is a risk that I'm trying to always keep front of mind (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

Earl knows what content she should be making if views and ad revenue were her primary goals. Instead, she creates content that she knows will underperform in terms of views to make sure her personality and passions are present in her work. Earl said:

> My videos about trans issues do really well. But I also do Stargate videos. Depending on the subject they can do okay, but they are never my number one performing video. So, if I was just chasing views I should be focusing more on the trans specific issues.

> But I like to mix in my own passions and showcase who I am (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

4.4.4 Finding 4: Serious youtubers have a serious identity problem

The stigma of "youtuber"

Serious youtuber interviewees have a serious problem when it comes to their professional identity. While many receive some income based on work done outside of YouTube, their core business is based on what they do on the platform. However, the label youtuber is generally disliked and seen as problematic. The question of what serious youtubers do is often "met with extreme trepidation" (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024). Quite a few interviewees did indeed express trepidation when asked the question. Hootman said, "When I tell people I'm a youtuber, I always feel they must be thinking, 'Oh, yeah. What's your real job, though?'" (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024). A common reason interviewees gave for such a feeling was the stereotypes and stigmas surrounding the platform because of what Barcza said is the extremely large amount of "low-quality, low-effort content" (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023). Deveaux-Isaacs said:

> There are particular stigmas surrounding YouTube. And that is in part due to the early creators of YouTube, as well as the people that are ostensibly the face of YouTube whose idea of a video is, "I have a lot of money, I'm very young and white, and I just gave money to a person, and I filmed it." It's rather than derivative. It's a logical progression of a game show. So, people begin to look at YouTube through a particular lens of laughability and flippancy. It lacks esteem and prestige when it comes to the entertainment industry (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

Several interviewees resist using "youtuber" or use it reluctantly. While Phil Edwards, who previously worked as a journalist at Vox, said he doesn't have a problem with the term, he also said, "I tell adults in the playground that I'm a video producer" because "they would be confused about why this grey-haired man is a youtuber" (P. Edwards, interview with author, January 9, 2024). He prefers to think of himself as a "small business media entrepreneur" (P. Edwards, interview with author, January 9, 2024).

Interviewees also expressed uneasiness about tying their work to a particular platform. British youtuber Nicholas said, "lots of creators have a funny feeling towards the idea of being defined by the platform that you happen to be releasing stuff on" (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023). Barcza said there is no clear alternative for youtuber:

> You could say content creator, but then that's too vague. Nobody gets what you're doing then, there are other types of content creators. I definitely hate the term influencer. I refuse to accept that. You could say a tech analyst in my particular case, but then I'm not a tech analyst working for a tech analyst firm who produces market reports. So, I typically end up being a youtuber, with lots of asterisks. I'm not a journalist. Though I think it fits just as well, or just as poorly, as any of the other terms that I've used (M. Barcza, interview with author, December 14, 2023).

No interviewee accepted the term "influencer". As with Barcza, the term was generally rejected strongly. Michalski, from Punter's Politics, responding to being labelled an influencer by a news presenter, expressed the commonly held view that influencer is strongly attached to the idea of marketer or advertiser, and that being label an influencer was considered a "jab" or insult akin to the accusation of being a sellout (Michalski [Punter's Politics], 2026b).

Like many interviewees, Earl, who often covers issues facing the LGBTQ community, changes her professional label depending on the context she finds herself in. In film industry contexts she presents herself as a director and filmmaker. Earl said:

> When I'm in a more YouTube-centred space, like VidCon, or talking with Nebula folks, I'll put more of the YouTube element forward. And sometimes if I'm in a more academic space, or in a queer space, I'll put the trans advocate first. It depends on the situation (J. Earl, interview with author, August 11, 2023).

Nicholas, a British youtuber with press credentials, often describes himself as a writer or a video creator. However, he said that if he wants someone to know what he does for a job then he said, "youtuber would be the quickest way of getting there" (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

For Hillhouse, his past professional life as a civil engineer still plays a big role in his professional identity, and he said, "I don't love the label youtuber because I think the connotation of it is negative for most of the people I interact with on a professional level" (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023). However, he admitted that it is hard to summarise his current work into a single job title. Hillhouse said:

> Normally, I say I'm an engineer, because even though I'm no longer practising as an engineer, I still am interpreting the world as an engineer. But the real job is so hard to describe, because I'm a producer, a writer, a researcher, a video editor. I do all these different things that in a normal media production field would be their own jobs. So, I don't know what my job is (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Burke, a former university teacher, also struggled to find an appropriate professional label for herself. Burke said:

> If I had to pick one word to describe myself, I would say I am an educator. But if you get your hair cut or something, and people ask what you do, and you say you're an educator, they're like, "Oh, where do you teach?" And that opens a whole can of worms. So, I usually preface my statement by saying, "This is embarrassing, but I'm actually a youtuber" (Z. Burke, interview with author, October 23, 2023).

Danylchuk, who holds a PhD in linguistics and is an expert on cultural preservation, publishes videos daily about the impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For Danylchuk, her professional label is not important. Danylchuk said:

> It's an outdated thing to assign yourself to a very narrow field. When I think about all the things that I do, I see that communication connects it all. It's present in my teaching, in my articles for newspapers, it is present in my cultural projects. With communication skills I can tell the story of the country. And on YouTube I'm trying to translate Ukraine into normal human terms to people. So, I specialise in communications (A. Danylchuk, interview with author, December 12, 2023).

At the time of his interview, economics youtuber Moran had only recently left his academic job at the London School of Economics to concentrate on his YouTube work. Moran said, "There's a bit of a reluctance to say I'm a youtuber. Because it's not taken seriously as a profession" (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023). Bahamian youtuber Deveaux-Isaacs, like others, uses different professional labels depending on the context he finds himself in. He said,

"It depends on who's asking me. If it's a younger person, I'll say I'm a youtuber. If it's an older person, I say I'm a political scientist. Both true. One more true than the other" (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

The interviewees in this chapter have no commonly preferred professional label. However, while their video topics may vary, they clearly do the same job. The lack of clarity around professional or occupational labels is significant. Professional labels can carry certain weight. Labels such as engineer, film maker, or university lecturer, bring with them a certain level of prestige that is lacking in terms such as vlogger, content creator, and youtuber. Some professional labels bring something else. As was seen in previous chapters, the journalist label is given significant weight in literature and law. Despite the lack of clarity around their professional identity, interviewees represent a distinct and identifiable group and interactions between serious youtubers is high.

Community of practice

As seen above, serious youtubers have an identity issue. While they are a distinct and identifiable group, they find it difficult to assign themselves to an occupational or professional label. Interviews also revealed that they act in a way that demonstrates a professional community. Community interactions include collaborations in video projects, helping each other learn, and observing and copying practices of others. Some face-to-face interactions occur, but interactions are often online and international. Interviewees said that online learning and mutual help generally occurs on platforms such as Discord and Slack. As was typical of interviewees, Schasfoort said that contact with other youtubers is "mostly digital. It's quite lonely, and we all have problems. Some people like to meet up face-to-face sometimes" (J. Schasfoort, interview

with author, September 6, 2023). Small collaborations often form the beginnings of deeper collegial connection. Moran said:

> I often ask people to read quotes for me, and I read quotes for other people as well. That's always a good way to open up a line of communication with another youtuber. It's kind of cool for the audience as well. And it adds a bit of variety to your video (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

Interactions and collaborations between serious youtubers suggest the existence of a community of practice. A community of practice occurs when people who independently engage in the same activity, do so in a shared domain and engage in "learning partnerships" where they "learn together" (Farnsworth et al., 2016, p. 143). The interviewees all participate in the same activity of regularly producing videos about serious topics on the shared domain of YouTube. For serious youtubers, there are two levels of this community of practice, a wider community, and a closer community. At the wider level, serious youtubers know of others through their video content. They observe the videos of others and copy practices and standards. At the closer level, serious youtubers engage directly with each other outside the YouTube platform to support each other and help each other learn and develop.

Often, closer communities begin by using the features available in the YouTube dashboard. This dashboard is an area on YouTube where youtubers can manage their videos and view analytics. This dashboard allows youtubers to identify peers who they then are able to reach out to. Hootman said:

> It's a huge community, on YouTube obviously, it's overwhelming. For my community I started following the same people who my audience interacts with. On our

> dashboard, it shows us what videos our audience is watching. So, you start to become friends. There're quite a few people that I consider to be my colleagues. I know I can drop into their DMs and ask for a favour. There's a handful of us that were all around the same size at the same time. We've been growing together. It's been really nice to have people you can talk to who are also doing this weird job. It's good to have people to vent with. It's nice to have people to give you advice on editing and help to just get through the day (A. Hootman, interviewed by author, January 31, 2024).

Small communities of serious youtubers are often closely connected to others publishing on similar niche topics. Danylchuk, who covers the war in Ukraine, said, "We are working in a very sensitive field. And all the youtubers here are very supportive of each other" (A. Danylchuk, interview with author, December 12, 2023).

Dealing with isolation and stress is one reason for connecting with youtuber peers. Deveaux-Isaacs said:

> I have creators that I watch and respect, and who also watch me and respect me. I can message and call them, which is extremely important because this is a very unorthodox career. It can be extremely isolating, because not many people understand what we do. Not many people know what it is to receive hate campaigns, or to have 1000s of individuals commenting on your videos whether scathing or extolling you. I don't think the human mind has adapted well to being able to internalise 1000s of people watching you and discussing you in a parasocial way where they think they know you, but they don't (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024).

US-based youtuber Edwards compared his youtuber communities with his experiences in journalism. Compared to his time working as a journalist at Vox, Edwards said he feels a much closer connection to his youtuber colleagues than he did with his journalism colleagues. Edwards said:

> One of the big differences from being at a media company is just the energy and the support of other youtubers that I've met. It's just so much more enthusiastic and positive. I feel more simpatico with them than I did with a lot of the journalists that I was working with. Now, youtubers will just reach out to me and talk to me, people are into collaborating. I got invited to this discord group with all these super nerdy, 3D-mappy European people. I now consider them kind of friends, in the weird internet way that somebody's a friend. They provide thumbnail feedback and technical help. They organised meetings with other youtubers to kind of interview and ask them about their processes and stuff like that. Those other youtubers in that discord group has helped me navigate the business side of things as I learn how that all works (P. Edwards, interview with author, January 9, 2024).

Highly educated and qualified

The youtubers interviewed are highly educated (Appendix G). Four of the 20 youtuber interviewees have PhDs, six have master's degrees, one has an MBA, and seven have bachelor's degrees. The fields of study are wildly diverse. They include music and performing arts, mechanical and civil engineering, economics and business, as well as political science and linguistics. This level of diverse higher education can also be seen in the wider pool of 79 interview candidates (Appendix H). My research suggests serious youtubers are highly educated people. And they bring their educational and professional experience to their work on YouTube.

Boodt said, "What sets me apart is that I'm an actual historian and I like to interact with academic sources. And what you see a lot on YouTube is just 'video Wikipedia'" (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

Their educational and professional experiences inform their work in various ways. Sometimes this can be subtle. Tom Nicholas has a PhD in performing arts. This fostered the research, project management, and presentation skills that he applies to his channel which covers politics, society, and culture. For others, educational and professional experiences have a more direct influence. Hillhouse has explicitly built his Practical Engineering channel, which has more than 4.5 million subscribers, on his engineering expertise.

Journalism and serious youtubers

I hypothesised that, if journalism is to be found anywhere on YouTube, it is likely to be found in the category of serious youtuber. With this in mind, interviewees were asked about their views on what journalism is and how their work fits within the news media ecosystem. When asked whether they considered their videos to be journalism, interviewees largely rejected the idea, even when their own definitions of journalism matched the content they were making for YouTube. For many interviewees, the possibility of their content being considered journalism had not occurred to them prior to being interviewed for this research. The two exceptions to this were the two Australian former journalists, Michael West and John Cadogan, both of whom considered what they did on YouTube to be journalism.

When asked about his idea of journalism, Dutch youtuber Boodt said:

> In an ideal world, a journalist is someone who reports on current affairs, and does so by looking at sources, interpreting sources, sifting through what are good and bad sources and who comes to a version of the truth. But also, who would talk to experts on the matter and be finding out a version of truth that is most close to the truth that there is, where you can talk about what is a truth with a certain kind of integrity, and based on checking and double-checking validity of sources (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

While Boodt said that he does this for his videos, like most other interviewees, he paradoxically does not accept the label journalist for himself, nor does he accept the label journalism for his content.

British youtuber Taylor publishes multi-hour-long videos. These videos, which attract millions of views, are generally deep-dive fact-checking investigations into topics such as the manosphere, pseudoscience, and sovereign citizens. Her channel started with videos about topics she was interested in, "[then] there was the sort of natural progression to start investigating political stuff" (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

Despite publishing in-depth investigations into serious and important issues, Taylor had never thought of herself as being a journalist, or her content journalism, until her interview for this research. Taylor said:

> I never call myself a journalist. I think of a journalist is somebody who does first-hand investigations. And I feel like what I do is take information that's already been gathered online. And what I do is compile it in an interesting way. And make sure that I give

> all my sources in the video description. I guess you could say that's a sort of journalism. I mean, I do also discover new things myself (G. Taylor, interview with author, July 5, 2023).

Nicholas had a clear definition of journalism:

> Journalism is the pursuit of trying to explain the world to people and to bring to light things that previously might not otherwise be widely known. The ideal is to do so without fear or favour. The extent to which that sort of journalism exists in the world is a different question (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

Nicholas acknowledged that the content he creates is, to use his phrase, "current affairs-y":

> I tend to describe my channel as being sort of broadly current affairs-y because it's often the thing that I'm using as a hook. I'll often describe it as being like a video version of *The Guardian* long read (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

However, Nicholas did not consider himself a "journalist", despite many of his videos being investigations into serious public interest issues such as UK public transport infrastructure policy and the precarious financial situation of many local governments in Britain (Nicholas [Tom Nicholas], 2024, 2026). Nicholas said:

> I wouldn't use the term journalist for myself because I don't feel like I exist within a structure that validates using that term. That feels like a term that one uses when one is within a structure where they have editors to check over their work, and where they are signed up to a code of ethics, with a kind of press regulator (T. Nicholas, interview with author, June 20, 2023).

Similarly, Hillhouse does not describe himself as a journalist, but he did admit to publishing "journalistic stuff":

> The content on my channel is a mix. And it has evolved over the years. We have our engineering fundamentals, where we pick an aspect of what the engineering profession does, or what we learn at school and try to make that fun, interesting and accessible. And the other side is more the journalistic stuff, where we're trying to take a story that's in the news, or a historical event, and discuss it in a way that is interesting (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Originally, Hillhouse focused on publishing educational videos on engineering fundamentals. He then began creating content on newsworthy topics because of what he saw as deficiencies in reporting from traditional journalists. Hillhouse said:

> Journalism just means helping people understand a current event so that they can make better decisions. That's really what has driven my foray into "journalism". I think the very first one we did was about this big winter storm that hit Texas and nearly took out the entire power grid. I'm in Texas, and I saw the news stories, and I thought that none of these journalists, newspapers, TV stations etc, were really capturing what happened. And that makes sense, because they don't have engineers on staff to explain it. That need for depth of technical content boiled down to something that a layperson can understand is why we started doing it (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Dikarev considered himself to be a youtuber and a corporate finance analyst, not a journalist. Despite this he described what he does on YouTube as being akin to a news reader. Dikarev said:

> My channel is pretty much daily news updates. I read news in the morning; whatever happened in the previous evening. I combine them in a meaningful video, put things in order, what makes sense, just exactly like news reporting. I'm not just reading news in the random order. I categorise them in chapters, exactly like what you see on the news. And what makes it different is that it is content created by a person, by a creator. Because a lot of people once again, especially younger generation don't watch TV, I do not know any single friend of mine who still watches TV news (A. Dikarev, interview with author, October 25, 2023).

Interviewees struggle to label the work that they do. The term youtuber is problematic, it has a certain stigma attached to it. However, it is often adopted reluctantly as it is the term considered to most encompass the activities of interviewees. At the same time, interviewees have an understanding that they perform the same "work" as other youtubers, and communities of practice form among those who cover similar topics in their videos. While all interviewees said they were motivated to inform and educate the public about important issues, most interviewees did not frame their work in terms of journalism.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter drew on interviews with 20 youtubers to help identify the practices and norms of serious youtubers and to establish it as a distinct category of content creator. It was

demonstrated that there is a distinct sub-category of youtubers, "serious youtubers". Serious youtubers share practices and norms. They share ethical concerns and standards that go beyond platform policy restrictions. Serious youtubers are not amateurs, they run serious businesses. They form an emerging profession or occupation. One where members interact with each other in a collegial manner, offering help, support, and learning. Yet at the same time they lack clarity regarding their professional identity. Serious youtubers are part of a professional community despite having an identity crisis, including about whether they are journalists.

The label "youtuber" is problematic for interviewees and "journalist" is generally not adopted. If they had to choose, most would choose the former. In addition, other labels, such as creator, are too broad, while more specific labels such as "educator" or "engineer" do not encapsulate the work that they do. While I call them serious youtubers, they struggle to define their professional selves. Their professional identities lack clarity. Despite the lack of an accepted professional label, my hypothesis is that if we are to find journalists and journalism on YouTube, it is among serious youtubers that we should be looking.

Interviewees share many production practices, and it was found that, as the American youtubr Tabani said, "there's a visual language to how YouTube's culture operates. And if you don't know that you're not going to function well" (Z. Tabani, interview with author, January 17, 2024). Serious youtubers are fluent in this language and share in its subtleties. Many aspects of what they do have been normalised, and they share common practices. However, for media professionals outside the YouTube ecosystem, such as traditionally trained journalists, the norms and practices of serious youtubers may not be obvious or may be perceived as being unprofessional. The visual language of YouTube is not the same as those for television, print, or online text-based media.

Serious youtubers are part of a community of practice, and their practices are learned and taught within youtuber communities. An early way youtubers learn from others in the community is by watching the videos of established youtubers and copying them. Interviewees said they engage in informal learning partnerships with other youtubers in several ways. They share tips, ask for and give advice, and provide each other moral support. They help each other learn how to be better youtubers. Collaborations on video projects are common and serious youtubers also meet up in person occasionally. This can happen at industry events such as conferences as well as less formal social gatherings.

Serious youtubers share ethical standards that go beyond YouTube policies. For example, there is no YouTube policy that requires transparency of sources yet serious youtubers have developed the practice of listing sources. Interviewees regulate themselves and their content based on their self-imposed ethics that centre on factual accuracy, source transparency, and minimisation of harm. Additionally, serous youtubers are further restricted in what they can do by YouTube's policies and guidelines which are policed by human-supported algorithms. These policies and guidelines shape the content in significant ways as avoiding the perceived heavy hand of the algorithm is viewed as a priority. The idea of youtubers signing up to a formalised code of ethics was broadly seen as a good thing, though some concerns were raised.

Serious youtubers run serious businesses, the nature of which is influenced by YouTube platform features and the serious youtuber community of practice. They apply the youtuber business model. These businesses start small, with one person doing everything. Then they expand over time as the YouTube channel grows. It is common for a sizable channel, with more

than 50,000 subscribers, to have a team of some sort. This may be permanent or casual employees, or it could be contractors hired on a job-by-job basis. Roles in such teams can include the main presenter and business owner, video editors, researchers, equipment operators, managers/ producers, and script writers. While the business may grow, it remains focused around a single main presenter and is more akin to an owner-operator business than a large corporation with investors and shareholders.

The business model of serious youtubers includes multiple revenue streams. There are three core sources of revenue in most iterations of the youtuber business model. The importance of each revenue stream varies depending on the focus and priorities of the serious youtuber. The first of these revenue streams is AdSense from YouTube. This is the share of advertising revenue that YouTube gives a youtuber for YouTube running advertisements before, during, or after their videos. The second core revenue stream is direct financial contributions from individual audience members, usually via Patreon. The third main revenue stream is sponsorships.

For many interviewees, their own description of journalism closely matched their own work on YouTube. Despite this, the label journalist is not self-ascribed, it is generally resisted, even if they refer to their work as news or journalism. The serious youtubers interviewed in this chapter did not set out to produce journalism, and they overwhelmingly do not describe themselves as journalists. Nonetheless, the motivations for building YouTube channels involved the desire to educate and inform people. And serious youtubers feel that their work is part of the news ecosystem. In some cases, serious youtubers are aware of their move into covering newsworthy topics. In other cases, they are less aware. A certain level of cognitive dissonance may be occurring where their description of their work matches their description of journalism, yet they don't consider themselves to be journalists. This chapter has demonstrated that serious

youtubers are producing content that could potentially be journalism. In the next chapter I turn to the direct question of whether serious youtubers do in fact produce journalism.

Chapter 5 – "Platform journalism": YouTube videos in the public interest

5.1 Introduction: Serious youtubers as producers of "platform journalism"

There is a gap in the news media market and youtubers know it. Growing numbers of youtubers are creating videos on newsworthy topics, and their success shows that there is significant demand for videos about serious topics presented in a youtuber way. Among these youtubers are Tom Nicholas, Zaid Tabani, and Zoe Bee. Tom Nicholas, from the UK, has over 650,000 subscribers and publishes one to two videos per month – often investigating political and social issues. Hungarian Marton Barcza, from TechAltar, routinely receives hundreds of thousands of views on his tech-focused videos. And American youtuber Zoe Bee's channel has been built largely on videos about US politics, society and culture.

This chapter takes a deeper dive into three successful channels that are meeting the audience demand for serious topics on YouTube. Three of the 20 "serious youtuber" channels analysed in this Chapter 4 were chosen for this deeper analysis: friendlyjordies; Money & Macro; and Ryan McBeth. This chapter has two goals. The first is to determine whether these channels produce journalism. The second goal follows the first. If these youtubers produce journalism, as my findings suggest they do, then this chapter interrogates what kind of journalism they produce. The previous chapter was exploratory. It focused on serious youtubers and identified themes that the interviewees had in common. Preceding chapters interrogated and clarified what journalism is in theory and law. This chapter brings together the concepts of journalism and

serious youtuber and is focused on exploring, with a tighter focus, whether the selected YouTube channels produce journalism. The analysis below shows that these three channels produce public interest journalism, as defined earlier (see 3.6).

This chapter further shows that these channels produce journalism that stands apart from what has come before. They are not print, television, radio, or news websites. Friendlyjordies, Money & Macro, and Ryan McBeth produce journalism using the norms and practices of serious youtubers, as detailed in Chapter 4 (See 4.4.1). In this way, they produce a new type of journalism, for which I propose the term "platform journalism". I define platform journalism as journalism created with a specific digital platform in mind, where the creator adopts norms and common practices of the platform. Platform journalism is a broad concept that sits alongside other types of journalism, such as those found in print, digital, radio and television.

In this chapter, I show that platform journalism exists on YouTube; further, it is likely that platform journalism also exists, in a somewhat different form, on rival platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Building on the definitions articulated in Chapters 2 and 3, I argue that there are two levels of platform journalism: platform journalism and public interest platform journalism. Moreover, platform journalism is a more precise and useful concept than those existing in the academic literature.

5.1.1 Previous research into journalism on social media

A considerable amount of scholarship about journalism on social media focuses on legacy news media organisations and their activities on digital platforms (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2019; Hermida,

2018). The "overarching approach […] has been to take professional normative constructs of the journalist and journalism as the starting point for analysis" (Hermida & Mellado, 2020, p. 866). Moreover, studies that investigate journalism on social media rarely focus on YouTube (Degen et al., 2024a, p. 405). Recently, however, that has started to change, with an emerging and growing body of literature investigating YouTube content creators related to news and journalism. More broadly, attempts have been made to analyse, explain, and categorise social media content creators who straddle the apparent expanse of grey area between journalists and non-journalists. However, existing terminology lacks sufficient clarity for the purposes of analysing serious youtubers and whether or not they produce journalism. This is because most existing studies are driven by assumptions based on a normative and well established "journalism profession". By adopting a democratic functions approach, this thesis abandons such assumptions.

In the academic literature on potential journalism by youtubers, YouTube creators are generally found to be something other than journalists and their content is found not to be journalism, though in many cases their work is found to contain elements of journalism (R. Lewis, 2020; Lichtenstein et al., 2021; Roslyng & Blaagaard, 2023). Research focusing on independent digital content creators more broadly generally ascribes them a status that is less than journalism, conceptualised as either outsiders, activists, interlopers, or on the periphery of the professional journalism field (Glazunova & Schapals, 2025; Holton & Belair-Gagnon, 2018; Lichtenstein et al., 2021).

Research that engages deeply with platform content that is potentially journalism includes an exploratory study by Lichtenstein et al., which investigated what they called "journalistic YouTubers" who "produce and distribute content that can be described as news" (2021, p. 1104). The language here is vague and assesses youtubers as not quite journalism producers. The

use of "can be described" leaves considerable ambiguity. In addition, the suffix *-ic* in "journalistic" signals that the youtubers in question are not journalists, but rather they merely resemble, or relate to, journalism.

In what he described as a "conceptual article", Hurcombe introduces the term "newsfluencer", which combines the words news and influencer (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1523). Newsfluencer is defined as "platformatised creators who operate according to the economic and cultural logics of online influencers to produce news content for participatory audiences" (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1524). Hurcombe's motivation in coining the neologism is to address "definitional uncertainty and enable a more systematic study of individual news producers working across content and platforms" (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1524). In this definition, "news content is broadly defined as content that reports or comments on current events and topics, but which is not necessarily professional journalism" (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1524). Professional journalism is left undefined, which means that definitional uncertainty remains.

One issue here is that the term "influencer" is problematic, as are associated terms such as newsfluencer. Influencer was universally disliked by the serious youtubers interviewed in Chapter 4 as it is associated with social media marketing rather than informing or educating the public. It assumes that content creators are motivated by a desire to influence or to make money. As the previous chapter showed, the dominant motivation among youtubers in my sample was to inform or educate people. The label influencer was explicitly rejected. This aligns with findings in other studies. In one 2025 study of TikTok creators, participants preferred the label content creator over influencer (Heřmanová et al., 2026, p. 172). Unlike newsfluencer, the concept of the serious youtuber proposed in Chapter 4 is specific, distinct and does not prematurely make assumptions about the motivations of my interviewees.

Alongside newsfluencer and journalistic YouTuber, another descriptor is "social journalism", which Hendrickx defined as "the news offering of designated social media channels intended to inform young audiences on a daily basis" (2023b, p. 1822). Social journalism has, at its core, an understanding of news based heavily on news values (Hendrickx, 2023b, p. 1815). However, Hendrickx writes that social journalism is limited to content produced by established media organisations for publication on social media (2023b, p. 1811). Thus, serious youtubers are explicitly excluded from the category of "social journalists" as conceptualised by Hendrickx.

Another limitation of the phrase social journalism is that it is used by journalism scholars in several "divergent ways" (Hendrickx, 2023a, p. 238); indeed, "the best definition is hard to pin down" (Hirst, 2018, p. 148). These divergent understandings include using social journalism to describe journalism as a service to communities and defining it to include "collaborative activities such as community organising" (Sweet et al., 2017, p. 93). In these understandings of social journalism, social refers to community, and not to social media. Another understanding of social journalism similarly expands beyond social media to encompass the involvement of citizens in the creation of news, generally collaborating with journalists at news organisations (Hirst, 2018, p. 148). In this way, Hirst "builds on the citizen journalism movement" to define social journalism as:

> a style of reportage and news coverage that lifts engagement from a method of monetising banal content to line the pockets of shareholders to an active process of participation and collaboration that is truly reciprocal in purpose and in outcomes (2018, p. 156).

A more precise label is "social media journalism". However, Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen write that the label is yet to be taken seriously by journalism scholars. In order to "kickstart debate" on how this might occur, they introduce a very broad definition for social media journalism, as "journalism which has the use of one or several social media platforms at its core for the production, dissemination and/or consumption of news content" (2024, p. 296). This definition was reaffirmed by the authors in a 2026 book on research methods for investigating social media journalism (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2026, p. 2). In their definition, social media journalism includes activities that solely use social media for dissemination of news. If dissemination of news is sufficient, then activities such as repurposing a television news broadcast for social media could be counted as "social media journalism". Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen's definition for social media journalism is too expansive for the purpose of analysing serious youtubers to determine whether or not they produce journalism and public interest journalism.

5.1.2 Assessing youtubers based on journalism's democratic functions

The analysis in this chapter addresses an important issue raised by Hurcombe when he asked, "how can 'good' newsfluencers be separated from malicious actors who claim to be 'journalists' for political or financial reasons?" (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1532). This chapter aims to bring some definitional certainty to, and to expand on, the existing body of literature by applying the "high bar" definition, which was introduced in Chapter 3, where public interest journalism is:

> **the editorially independent activity, guided by ethical considerations, of collecting, interpreting and regularly publishing verifiable newsworthy content on public interest issues so that people may be better informed and engage in better decision making in the public sphere.**

Before turning our attention to friendlyjordies, Money & Macro and Ryan McBeth, it is worth revising key elements of this definition`. In this thesis, "editorial independence" means that the media content creator and their employer have no material relationship with the topic at the centre of a particular media output. The requirement for "ethical considerations" is that there is evidence of ethical considerations in published content and/or practices. "Public interest issues" are topics and events that potentially impact the health and wellbeing of society as a whole, or subsections of society, or their ability to exercise their democratic rights and duties. Examples of public interest issues are public health, natural disasters, the integrity of those in power, and the economy (see 3.6). This deliberately narrow definition is built upon the core democratic functions of journalism, and the central aim of this chapter is to test whether the work of these three specific youtubers meet it.

5.2 Method

This chapter analyses the YouTube channels friendlyjordies, Money & Macro and Ryan McBeth. These channels were selected from the pool of 20 serious youtuber channels included in the previous chapter. The definition of journalism provides a low bar for assessment. The definition of public interest journalism provides a much higher bar as it has at its focus the core democratic functions of journalism. Three methods were applied and combined: a content analysis was conducted on the three channels; a qualitative close reading analysis was then done on three videos from each channel; and this close reading analysis was then combined with data from semi-structured interviews.

5.2.1 Channel selection justification

Friendlyjordies

Friendlyjordies consists of a small team that includes editors and camera operators. Jordan Shanks-Markovina is the main presenter. Kristo Langker is a producer, writer, researcher and occasional presenter. Langker is the interviewee representing the channel for this study. Shanks-Markovina did not respond to several requests to be interviewed. The channel produces a variety of content that includes comedy skits, pop-culture reviews, and videos about serious topics that include politics, the environment, and Australian law.

This channel was selected for further analysis because it often publishes videos covering topics of public interest. It was also selected due to its impact on New South Wales politics and because of audience perceptions of the channel as producing high quality journalism, as detailed in Chapter 1.

Money & Macro

Money & Macro centres around its presenter, Dr Joeri Schasfoort, who does most of the work on the channel. There is an account manager who helps with sponsor communications and other administrative tasks. Occasionally, Schasfoort engages contractors or youtuber colleagues for help (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023). This channel was chosen as it regularly publishes videos on newsworthy and public interest topics as well as fact-checking videos. Another reason for selection is that Schasfoort has attended, after official invite, press only events at the

European Central Bank (ECB). In addition, there is significant engagement in the comments of the videos where audience members very often remark on the high quality, well researched nature, of the information presented.

Even when they don't explicitly label Schasfoort as a journalist, top comments often praise the channel's research, information quality and analysis:

- "Really awesome video. I especially love how you painstakingly try to be objective and level headed" (@jellovendigar, 2023).
- "When I saw Joeri uploaded a video about CBDC I immediately clicked to watch it. Thanks for continuing to produce interesting, educational and accurate information" (@mcteags, 2023).
- "I love this channel so much. It provides unbiased economic info, unlike other influencers who just throw out biased opinions to please their followers (@sornponwichaidit4172, 2024).
- "This was one of your best videos, it touched a lot of perspectives and I liked the inclusion of an additional perspective like Singapore" (@Indubb, 2025).

Ryan McBeth

The Ryan McBeth channel is produced and presented by Ryan McBeth, an IT security specialist and a former US Army anti-armour soldier. This channel was selected as it regularly produces videos on newsworthy and public interest topics in the areas of politics, international relations, security and armed conflict. McBeth has also attended various events with journalist credentials

and has made numerous appearances on television news programs since he became popular on YouTube (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2025, 2026).

As was the case with friendlyjordies and Money & Macro, video comments contributed to the decision to include Ryan McBeth in this chapter's analysis.

- "Fantastic video (and videos). Keep them coming! Thank you for fighting misinformation - with facts" (@ranig2848, 2023).
- "Your videos and the analysis have made me think differently on the clips shown on news reals [sic]. Nearly all of the journalists on News have no idea what is on the clip" (@m.junaidmahmood4209, 2023).
- "Thank you for your tireless efforts exposing these people who profit from the hate and division that is hurting our society" (@iammrbeat, 20 July 24).

5.2.2 Content analysis

A content analysis was conducted on the three channels as a preceding stage to the qualitative close reading analysis. This was done, in part, to obtain a better overall picture of the channels and their output. More importantly, this was a necessary step to identify videos on the channels that had a high chance of being journalism and therefore were good candidates for the close reading analysis. An initial content analysis was done on the friendlyjordies channel between May and November 2024. Further content analysis was done in April 2025 with an expanded sample to include the channels Money & Macro and Ryan McBeth.

This content analysis involved the analysis of 606 videos from the three channels, published between 3 September 2020 and 10 April 2025 (Appendix K). The publishing frequency of each channel varies, with friendlyjordies publishing approximately two to three times as many videos each month as Money & Macro. The number of videos analysed from each channel varies to reflect this, with 375 videos included from friendlyjordies, 150 from Ryan McBeth and 81 from Money & Macro. These high numbers were intended to ensure, as far as possible, that the results were representative of the channels' content more broadly.

The analysis involved several stages and the development of a two-part codebook (Appendix J). For each channel, the basic details for each sample video were recorded. These were the date of publication, the video title, and the video's hyperlink. For the first part of the content analysis a video's main topic was assessed as to whether it was a newsworthy public interest topic. This was recorded in the codebook as a Yes or a No. Newsworthy information has news values which are, as explained in Chapter 2, those developed by Harcup & O'Neill and include "bad news", "conflict", "the power elite", and "entertainment" (2017, p. 1482). What makes a topic one of "public interest" was discussed in Chapter 3 and include economic issues, political issues, social issues and public health issues (see 3.6).

At this stage, a finding that a video concerned a newsworthy public interest topic did not mean that the video was determined to be public interest journalism. The second part of the content analysis recorded the main topic of the video and included descriptions for each code. Initial codes were created based on early observations of the video content and additional codes were added as they emerged. For a newsworthy public interest topic, the codes were "politics", "economics", "environment", "societal issues" and "technology". For non-public interest topics, the codes were "comedy", "music", "education", "history" and "personal" (Appendix J).

5.2.3 Close reading

Following on from the content analysis, a close reading was conducted on nine YouTube videos – three each from friendlyjordies, Money & Macro and Ryan McBeth – that were found to cover newsworthy public interest topics. As stated in Chapter 3, close reading is "the detailed observation of a work, based on immersion into the piece sustained over repeated viewing, supplemented by the systematic notation of relevant details, leading to an explication and higher order analysis of the work" (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2012, p. 395). Unlike in Chapter 3, the close reading in this chapter involves analysing audio-visual media. The method of close reading is not new to audio-visual media formats and has been applied to media as varied as cinema (Leach, 2014) and video games (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2012). YouTube videos have been analysed using close reading in numerous studies since the early years of the platform (Desai-Stephens, 2022; Lamerichs, 2020; Manoukian, 2010; Mohan & Punathambekar, 2019; Oh, 2015; Plaut, 2016; Sumiala, 2019; Vernallis, 2013).

A close reading worksheet was developed which contained sections for recording observations around key areas of interest for this study. The worksheet included a table for time-stamped observations of both journalism elements and norms from and common practices of serious youtubers. Observations of journalism elements were guided by this thesis' definitions of journalism and public interest journalism, while observations of serious youtuber norms and practices were guided by the findings in Chapter 4.

Each of the nine videos was viewed multiple times. The videos were paused frequently while viewing to note down observations in each of the areas on the worksheet. The observations were then analysed. To double check observations, and aid in the analysis, sections of the videos were

re-watched as needed. Further, this close reading involved analysing more than just the video content: thumbnails, descriptions, comments, and titles were also included. Timestamps are given below for examples of relevant video elements. The videos for this chapter were selected and analysed between April and June 2025.

The friendlyjordies videos included in this study are:

- *The Baddest MP: Dutton* (2022) - https://youtu.be/aIGKCkS01EA
- *friendlyjordies Attacks Labor* (2022) - https://youtu.be/8n7yjc867eE
- *Paradise Bombed* (2023) - https://youtu.be/nSf3268tAbg

From Money and Macro, the videos analysed are:

- *Why Trump's tariff chaos actually makes sense (big picture)* (2025) - https://youtu.be/1ts5wJ6OfzA
- *Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more* (2024) - https://youtu.be/5kIRWcwatnU
- *Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies* (2023) - https://youtu.be/Dpu6G_UlSdM

For Ryan McBeth, the videos selected for study are:

- *Propaganda Hardpoints - Limitations of Russian Misinformation Due to Atlantic Resolve* (2023) - https://youtu.be/DZ6eMYW7Xwc
- *Rapid Roundup 11 - Ukrainian Mortars, Trench-clearing Shotguns and Sanitized Storm Shadow Missiles* (2023) - https://youtu.be/KRvJjUCiUcY
- *Who is End of Wokeness?* (2024) - https://youtu.be/8zZeZFs5KLQ

5.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

One person from each channel was interviewed: Kristo Langker from friendlyjordies; Dr. Joeri Schasfoort from Money & Macro; and Ryan McBeth from the channel of the same name. Kristo Langker is a long-term, and central, team member of friendlyjordies, having started there in 2016. Langker is known as a producer at friendlyjordies and has also appeared as a presenter in videos. Langker was interviewed on 25 August 2023. Schasfoort began the channel Money & Macro in 2020. He ran and developed it while working as an economics lecturer. However, in early 2023 he gave up academia to work on the YouTube business full-time. Schasfoort was interviewed on 6 Sep 2023. McBeth's channel also started in 2020. Originally it focused on giving life and relationship advice, in a humorous way, to IT professionals. Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, McBeth posted a video about the conflict that leveraged his experience as an anti-armour infantry soldier in the US Army, as well as insights from his master's degree which had analysed earlier phases of the Russia-Ukraine war. From that point the channel pivoted to focus on politics and military conflict. McBeth was interviewed on 18 Sep 2023.

5.3 Content analysis results

The majority of videos on all three channels were assessed to be about newsworthy public interest topics. On the friendlyjordies channel, 64% of the videos are predominantly on newsworthy public interest topics, for Money & Macro that figure is 90% and for Ryan McBeth it is 61% (Figure 9). This is not to say that those videos are examples of public interest journalism. Rather it means that the videos are mainly about newsworthy public interest topics.

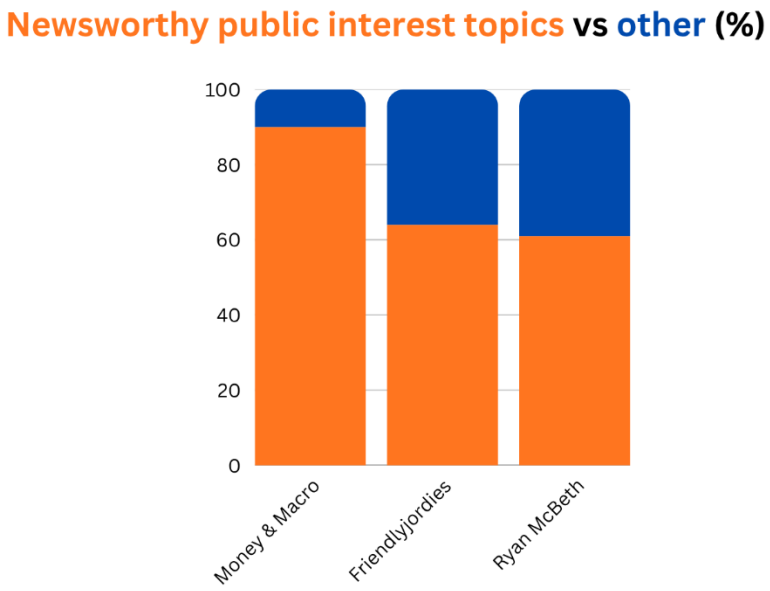

Figure 9. Percentage of public interest vs non-public interest topics on the 3 channels.

Two of the three channels had a clear focus. For Money & Macro, more than 93% of videos about newsworthy public interest topics covered economic issues (Figure 11). For Ryan McBeth, almost 97% focused on politics (Figure 12). The friendlyjordies channel covered a wider range of newsworthy public interest topics. On that channel, about 56% were on politics, 27% were on societal issues, and almost 15% covered environmental issues (Figure 10).

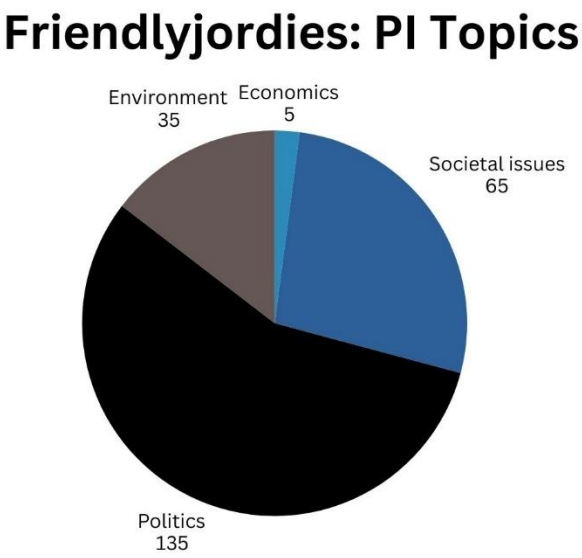

Figure 10. Public interest topics on channel: friendlyjordies.

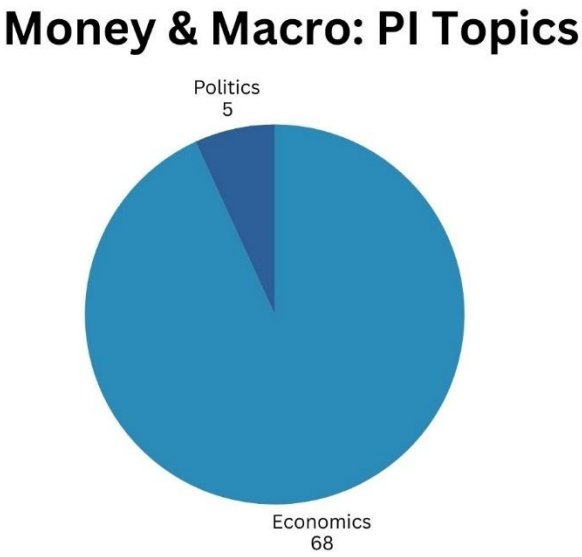

Figure 11. Public interest topics on channel: Money & Macro.

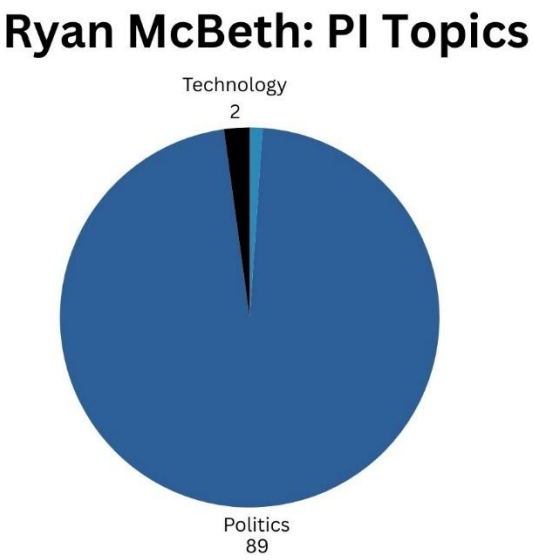

Figure 12. Public interest topics on channel: Ryan McBeth.

5.4 Findings: Close reading video analysis

5.4.1 Friendlyjordies

The Baddest MP: Dutton - published 4 March 2022

The video is about alleged improper connections between private businesses and government actors as well as alleged activity involving illicit drug use. These two issues are areas of public interest, and stories on these topics are often characterised as "hard news" when covered in news media (Ngai, 2022, pp. 61, 66). At first glance, the name of this video could be mistaken for an attack on the former Australian MP Peter Dutton, or perhaps a tongue-in-cheek joke. Rather, as shown in the video (2:54), the title was taken directly from an advertisement for a company

called SCD American Vehicles in which Dutton, who was the Minister for Home Affairs at the time, was a willing participant (McCleery, 2019).

SCD American Vehicles imports and converts large private-use vehicles from the US and is a subsidiary of Boss Capital Holdings. In this video, friendlyjordies investigates the activities of this company and the connections of the company's director Eddie Kocwa to government departments and Liberal Party politicians such as Dutton and Ryan Shaw. The video contains numerous documents of financial transactions and internal company communications, as well as photos of alleged illicit drug use, that were leaked to friendlyjordies by a confidential whistleblower.

This video's investigation into the public interest issues is original and exclusive, which are characteristics of investigative public interest journalism. Evidence of investigation is seen in the inclusion of primary and secondary sources which are shown on screen and are used to tell the story. The information provided is done so in a transparent way and it is verifiable. Primary sources include public reports (4:14), allegations from a confidential whistleblower (11:36), leaked photos (13:42), leaked emails (11:17), and leaked financial accounts (6:28). Allegations by the confidential informant are clearly signposted as such. Facts are given in context and in conjunction with visual evidence. The story told comes from the data.

The video contains observable signs of ethical considerations which align with commonly accepted journalistic ethics. These include efforts to minimise harm by protecting the privacy of human sources who are not subjects of the investigation. This is observable in the video when documents are redacted (8:22) and people's faces are blurred (14:51), being faces of people who

are not subjects of the investigation. Also, the video includes questions being sent, and rights of reply given, to parties named in the report (Figure 13). Where subjects gave a reply, responses were included in the video (17:33). It is also clear who produced the video and there is no indication of attempts to avoid responsibility for publishing the content.

In terms of presentation, *The Baddest MP: Dutton* is dominated by elements and norms that are standard for serious youtubers. The report is presented using a conversational mode of address, beginning with a strong hook in the first seconds of the video. Jokes (5:23) and pop-culture references (14:31) are included, and numerous calls to action are made. These calls to action include requests to contribute to the channel's monetisation platform Patreon (19:05), requests for audience members to share the video, to leave a comment (19:28), and to watch a previous video of the channel (4:10). Another norm present is explicit references to demonetisation concerns (2:54).

Serious youtuber norms and common practices are also observable in the editing, with multiple instances of dramatic sound effects (1:07), background music, ken burns effect (0:34), crop cuts (0:30), audio manipulation to avoid demonetisation (2:54), title and end sequences (0:39; 19:28), and use of YouTube end screen template (19:33). Youtuber norms are also present in the video's description. In the description section the youtuber norms include links to Patreon, merchandise, past videos, and other friendlyjordies social media accounts. The use of youtuber norms and common practices make this video an example of platform journalism.

This video reports on a public interest topic with information supplied by a confidential whistleblower. Information presented is based on verifiable facts and source transparency is

evident. There is editorial independence, and the video contains numerous news values such as exclusivity, the power elite, as well as relevance and magnitude. This video meets the journalism definition above. However, the video goes beyond that first definition. It performs the democratic functions of informing the public and holding power to account. It is investigative public interest journalism. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 696,500 views.

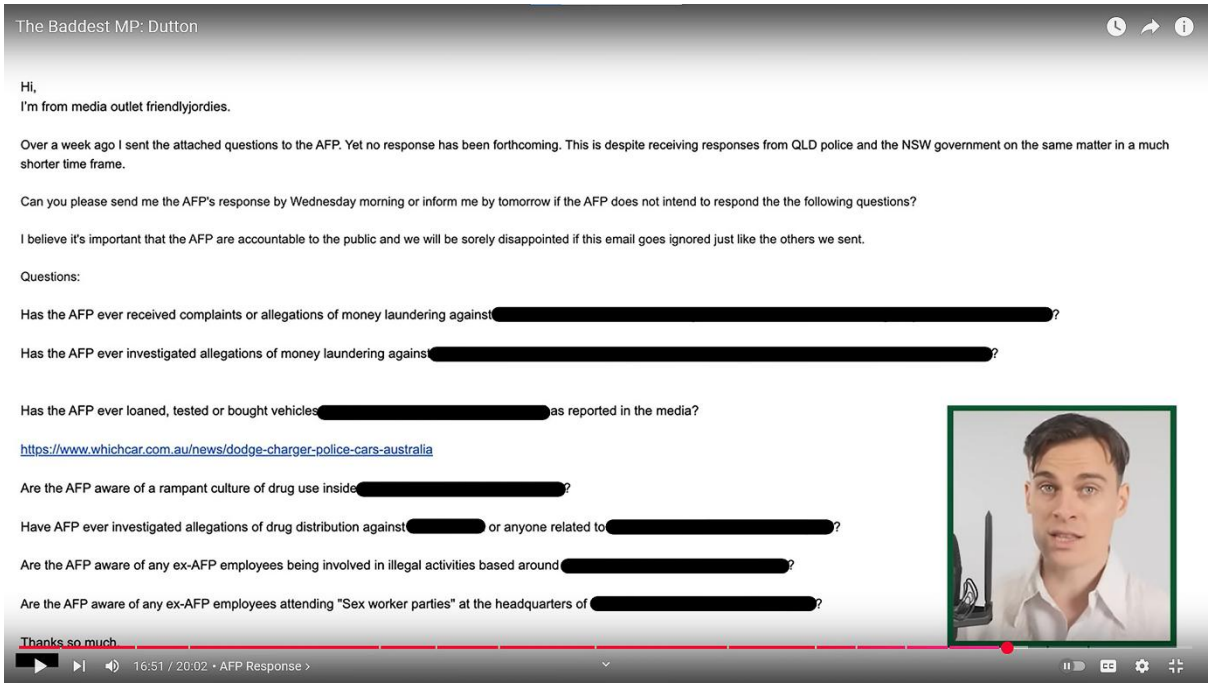

Figure 13. Example of right of reply offer [redactions by author] (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022b).

Friendlyjordies attacks Labor - published 17 Jan 2022

The second video in this study reports on a Labor politician at the local government council of Burwood, in Sydney, and his alleged connections to property developers – connections that go against NSW Labor party rules. The public interest issue is political integrity, and the video performs the democratic functions of informing the public and holding power to account.

However, no direct accusations of wrongdoing are made regarding any of the subjects in the video. The presenter even goes so far as explicitly says he is "not imputing anything" (5:56; 9:26). The unusual use of this technical word from defamation law appears to be an attempt to pre-emptively ward off accusations of defamation.

In the video, facts are presented from which a narrative of questionable behaviour and relationships emerges. This is done through the presentation of primary sources (Figure 14) combined with information derived from previously published news articles from major news organisations (2:42). Primary documents used as part of the report include the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch) Rules 2020 (1:43), a report from the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (2:32), council development proposal applications (4:30), council meeting minutes (5:14), caveat documents (4:36), and building plans (6:48).

The reporting in this video is done in a youtuber style. The presenter uses a conversational mode of address. The description includes links to social media, Patreon and merchandise. Also, an outlandishly exaggerated thumbnail is used for the video. The thumbnail includes the image of Shanks-Markovina taking a large bite out of a Labor party logo and the text "How pradictibal [sic], the left eats itself". Throughout the video there are short comedy skits (0:19), background music, dramatic sound effects that match visuals (6:19), pop-culture references (3:05), ken burns effects (2:02), and crop cuts (0:34). There are calls to action for users to like, subscribe, share and comment (10:36). The issue of demonetisation is raised (1:15), and a YouTube end template is used (10:44).

As seen in the first video, this video uses serious youtuber norms to present verifiable facts in a report on a public interest issue. It performs the democratic functions of informing the public about public interest issues and holding power to account. This video meets the definition of public interest journalism as defined in this thesis. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 299,860 views.



Figure 14. Primary source used in investigation (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022a).

Paradise Bombed - published 4 August 2023

This video involves writer, producer and sometimes presenter Kristo Langker travelling to small villages and the site of a former refugee camp in Papua New Guinea, some of the most remote and inaccessible locations on earth. The video features Langker reporting on violent conflict in the region and alleged atrocities against civilian perpetrated by the Indonesian military. Shanks-Markovina, presenting from Australia, opens the video and provides an introduction and

context. Norms and common youtuber presentation practices are present in the video. Most of them are in the ten-minute introduction section presented by Shanks-Markovina. They include jokes (0:40), calls to action (9:15), and the use of the YouTube video end screen template (45:45). However, the majority of the video, where Langker is presenting, the video resembles a traditional long-form documentary.

News values found in this video include conflict, drama, and bad news. The topic is in the public interest as violent conflict on Australia's doorstep is a clear foreign affairs issue on which Australian citizens may make their preferences known to their political representatives. Ethical considerations are evident again. This is seen in privacy considerations with the masking of the identities of several interviewees (20:21), the blurring of graphic imagery (6:19), and the inclusion of multiple viewpoints.

Data from primary and secondary sources are used to tell the story. Secondary sources (1:23) are used heavily to introduce the story and provide context. Primary sources used in this story include international agreements (3:15), academic literature (6:28), and original audio-visual material. The video also includes numerous on-camera interviews (Figure 15). Interviewees include refugees (11:41), eyewitnesses (18:35), a political science professor (32:35), and the Australia Deputy Chairman of Thales, the company that manufactures munitions reportedly used on remote villages in Indonesia (20:23).

This video is an example of platform journalism, and it is an original investigation that amounts to a detailed foreign correspondence report. Facts presented are verifiable and there is transparency with sources. It is reminiscent of prestigious Australian journalism television

programs Dateline and Four Corners. This is understandable as the award-winning investigative journalist and lawyer Mark Davis, who previously worked on both programs, provided inspiration and advice for the Paradise Bombed investigation (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). This video also gives voice to extremely marginalised people: refugees fleeing across international borders to escape violence. It is a clear example of investigative public interest journalism, and it performs the democratic functions of informing the public about public interest issues. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 2,203,107 views. Views such as these would rival even the most successful Australian television broadcast.



Figure 15. Langker with interviewees. Blurring by friendlyjordies is evidence of ethical considerations (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2023b).

5.4.2 Money & Macro

Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies - published 8 December 2023

Unlike friendlyjordies, Dr. Joeri Schasfoort, of Money & Macro, mostly covers economic issues. In the video, *Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies*, Schasfoort goes into depth about how central banks around the world are researching, trialling, and implementing their own digital currencies. Broad finance and economic implications of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) are discussed, as are implications for individuals. The video topic is newsworthy and of public interest and the primary democratic function of journalism that this video performs is informer. It does this by presenting verifiable facts on the topic and providing context and analysis through which the facts can be understood.

A significant effort is made to provide background information and context for the story (12:14). Throughout the video, primary (Figure 16) and secondary sources are used. The information in the sources drives the story forward. Secondary sources include news articles from publications such as *The New Daily* (5:26), *The New York Times* (7:14), and Bloomberg (25:43). Primary sources are primarily official documents and statements from organisations such as the Bank of England (9:03), the International Monetary Fund (16:08), and the OECD (13:14). Sources are displayed on screen throughout the video and a transcript with embedded links to sources is available via the video description.

The video includes observable serious youtuber norms and practices. These include editing norms such as text overlays (1:34), ken burns effects (5:37) and jump cuts (24:46). It also

includes presentation and content norms. For example, memes are included (2:20), a sponsor ad read is present (2:51), and calls to action are made (30:38). Schasfoort speaks directly to the audience in a conversational manner, and the video includes him asking a direct question to the audience (30:12). He also integrates his movements with planned video edits such as when he points to where a video thumbnail will appear on screen as he asks viewers to watch that video (30:53).

The video facilitates and contributes to public sphere deliberation. This is observable in the comment section of the video. Top comments engage with the video topic in a serious way, for example, discussing the merits of CBDCs and their drawbacks as they see it. Money & Macro takes part in these deliberations by engaging with and replying to audience members in the comments. As an example of these interactions, one commenter posted:

> Another problem with CBDC might be that there is a single point of failure... The software and servers running the CBDC would be a prime target for hostile states. Getting a view of all transactions in another state and having the option to bring down the payment systems there fits very well within the modern hybrid warfare (@EJD2012, 2023).

In reply, Money & Macro commented:

> Yes. But, this is also something that central bankers have discussed as an advantage of a cbdc living alongside private and cash payment options. The first advantage is that there are more options. The second is that a government might build a system with an attack of a foreign power in mind whereas this is a bit much to ask from a private bank (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2023b).

This video performs the democratic functions of informing the public about public interest issues and contributing to public sphere deliberation. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 128,240 views.

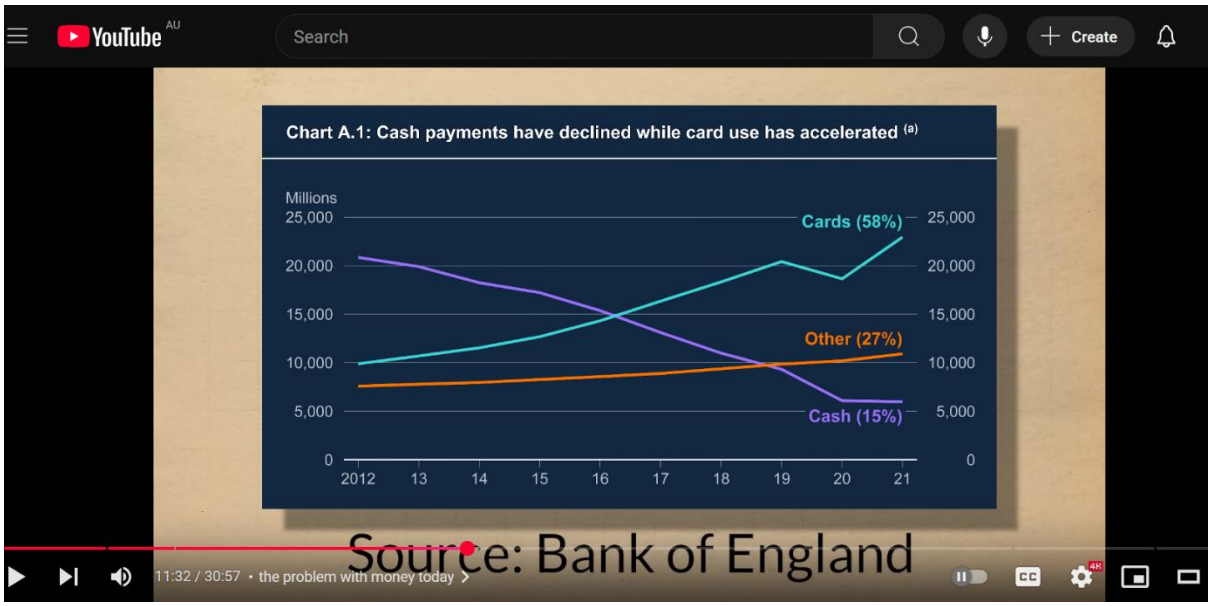

Figure 16. Use of primary source (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2023a).

Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning - Bangladesh's revolution & more - published 22 August 2024

Unlike the previous video, this one does not have a single topic of focus that is analysed in any depth. Rather, as the video title indicates, the video covers a variety of newsworthy recent events. The events covered include a major Ukrainian incursion into Russia, changes to Italian tax laws for expatriates, the revolution in Bangladesh, and significant volatility in global stock markets. In addition to being newsworthy, these events are issues of public interest for many people.

In the comments below this video, Money & Macro makes clear that the format is not typical for the channel, saying, "Still experimenting with a new format. But not to worry, more in depth analyses will be back in September" (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2024c). Rather than worry, the audience welcomed the new type of video with many showing their support and appreciation. Many comments suggest they consider the video to be news.

- "I have been looking for this kind of 'weekly economic update' for sooo long! Would love to introduce this to my weekly economic news digestion" (@carlthuresson4967, 2024).
- "I'm a big fan so far. Impressive background information on major developments in a compact format" (@12undeadz, 2024).
- "Weekly updates are awesome" (@paxundpeace9970, 2024).

The shot framing and set are consistent with that of a youtuber. Dressed in smart-casual attire, the presenter addresses the camera in a conversational manner. There are graphics, animations (7:45), and text overlays (0:12), with sound effects to match (3:34). The ken burns effect is used (2:26), a meme is shown (9:46), and there is an ad read (15:00). A call to action tellingly asks subscribers to "follow me to stay up to date about almost all of the latest news" (15:09). The call to action is explicit: the video content from Money and Macro contains news.

In the video, Schasfoort describes and analyses each of the stories with a particular focus on economic implications. He only uses secondary sources and applies the expert knowledge he gained through his economics PhD and his time spent as a lecturer at university. The secondary sources used are predominantly articles from major news organisations such as CNN (1:39), South Asia Monitor (11:38), and Financial Times (12:52). Original graphs and maps are used to

provide additional contextual information. At one point he gives a clearly signposted opinion, which is in line with the editorial practices prescribed under news media codes to clearly identify opinion and news. This video is not investigative, nor does it cover exclusive news. However, it is more than just re-reading previously published news as it contains original analysis of that news. It informs the public about public interest issues and meets the definition of public interest journalism. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 78,792 views.

Why Trump's tariff chaos actually makes sense (big picture) - published 4 April 2025

This video combines primary and secondary sources to provide an in-depth analysis of US actions regarding tariffs and the role they play in furthering US strategic goals. In the video, Schasfoort reports on and analyses the public comments and publications of people in the "Trump team" that largely determines US trade and tariff policy. People of focus include US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Stephen Miran, a senior economic advisor to the US President.

The video topic is of public interest as the actions and intentions of the Trump administration have a large impact on policy and economies around the world. Secondary sources are used to provide information and context. These sources include news articles from KTVU Fox 2 (0:22), the *Financial Times* (13:53), and *The Atlantic* (14:30). Primary sources for the analysis include quotes from US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent (15:11) and quotes from Stephen Miran, Chair of the US Government's Council of Economic Advisers (16:52). Another key primary source used in this video is a report written by Miran titled "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System" (1:47).

The presentation for the video is again typical of serious youtubers. The framing is a medium shot of the presenter at a desk. Clothing is smart casual where the sleeves of the shirt are rolled up to the elbow. The set is what looks like a room in a house with lights and paraphernalia on shelves in the background (Figure 17). Zoom cuts, ken burns effects, and stock footage are used in the video. The opening line from the presenter is, "What the heck is going on?" (0:15) and there is a sponsor ad read (23:05).

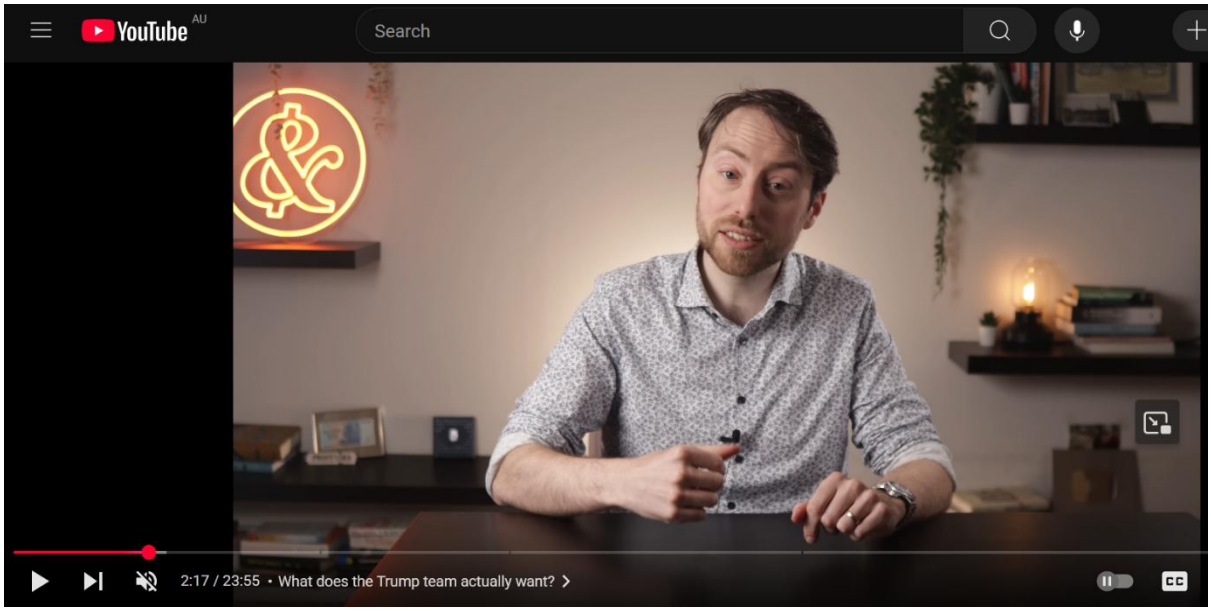

Figure 17. Presenter Dr Schasfoort and his set (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2025a).

This video is an example of public interest platform journalism. It brings together primary and secondary sources to inform audiences about a serious issue. As with other Money & Macro videos, it also stimulates and facilitates public sphere deliberation as can be seen in the comment section. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 5,100,975 views.

Significantly, Money & Macro published corrections and updates to this story in a follow-up video, on 2nd May 2025, called *I was wrong about Trump's tariff masterplan* (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2025b). This indicates Schasfoort's commitment to providing information and analysis that is accurate, even after a video is posted.

5.4.3 Ryan McBeth

Rapid Roundup 11 – Ukrainian Mortars, Trench-clearing Shotguns and Sanitized Storm Shadow Missiles - published 26 May 2023

While Money & Macro focused mostly on economic issues, Ryan McBeth mostly covers politics, with particular attention paid to security and violent conflict. The video *Rapid Roundup 11 – Ukrainian Mortars, Trench-clearing Shotguns and Sanitized Storm Shadow Missiles* is one in a series on the channel where McBeth, explains numerous newsworthy events in a single video. In this video series the topic selection is not initiated by McBeth. Rather, the topics covered come from audience questions. In this video, the topics included trench fighting tactics by Ukrainian soldiers, missile supply chain issues, and procurement decisions by NATO member states. The video largely relies on the opinion and knowledge of Ryan McBeth with minimal supporting sources. Some secondary sources were used which included an article from *Africa Intelligence* (8:05) and images of weapon systems to aid analysis, such as an image of a Storm Shadow missile (3:21).

The video contains youtuber elements and norms. These includes several calls to action, one in the form of a memefied request for audience members to buy merchandise (8:43). Also present in the video are common youtuber editing elements such as kens burns effects (3:00), text

overlays (3:32) and a greenscreen background change done for humour (0:43). The presenter speaks directly to the audience in a casual, conversational manner. At one point he talks about his production decisions and experimentation with a greenscreen. The greenscreen in this video also highlights the common practice of youtuber leaving in minor errors. In this video the error is the greenscreen flapping in the bottom right corner of the frame (5:10). It is also noteworthy that the backdrop scene displayed on the green screen is McBeth's bedroom. This green screen decision demonstrates that even when literally any backdrop could be used, McBeth projects onto his green screen an "authentic" everyday room.

This video meets the definition of journalism. It is a video that comments on newsworthy information for public consumption. It exhibits several of Harcup & O'Neill's (2017) news values, including conflict, audio visuals and follow-up. It provides information and stimulates and facilitates conversation. While the topics in the video are not discussed in depth, the video also meets the definition of public interest journalism put forward in this thesis. The Ukraine-Russia war is a public interest topic, and the format of the video is explicitly meant to bring audience members into the discussion. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 138,205 views.

Propaganda Hardpoints – Limitations of Russian Misinformation Due to Atlantic Resolve - published 18 July 2023

This video is a deep dive explainer into the limitations, or "hardpoints", of state-backed misinformation campaigns. The video also includes an investigation into the misinformation surrounding the annual US military exercise "Atlantic Resolve". Early in the video key terminology is defined and context is provided. Original research conducted by McBeth is

presented in the form of maps (3:33) and tables (3:45) using proprietary data analysis software (Figure 18). When McBeth gives his opinion, it is signposted as such (5:52).

The presentation of this story involves youtuber norms and practices. These include ken burns effects (1:00), text overlays (1:08), and overlaying a previous Ryan McBeth video as B-roll (0:32). There is a comedic skit which amounts to a call to action for audience members to buy channel merchandise (6:17). A YouTube end-screen template is also used (6:57). The set is an apartment with a balcony in the background; the presenter is wearing a floral shirt; and the framing is a medium shot.

This video investigates a serious public interest issue and seeks to educate the audience around issues of misinformation campaigns. It performs the democratic function of informing the public about public interest issues. It meets the definition of public interest journalism. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 103,655 views.

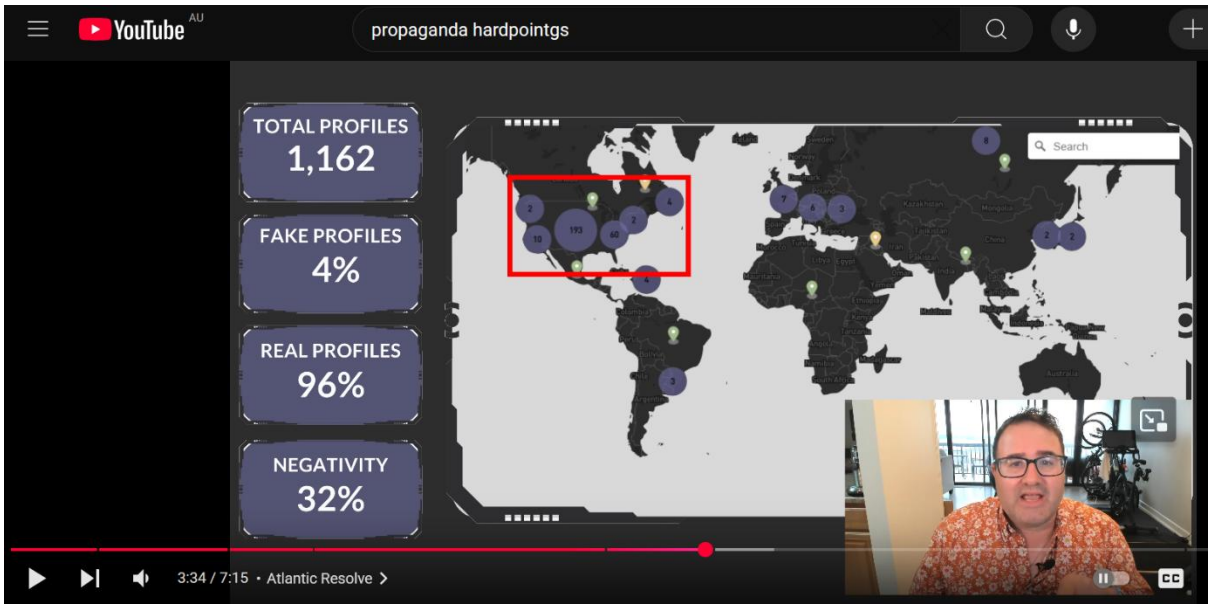

Figure 18. McBeth presents data from his original research (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2023).

Who is End Wokeness? - published 20 July 2024

This video is a detailed investigation into a large anonymous account on the social media platform X that is responsible for a significant amount of misinformation. The video is focused on data that Ryan McBeth collected, primarily from X, and includes the analysis of around 24,000 X posts (Figure 19). The data and analysis are presented using tables, graphs, and charts (5:26). Primary sources also included in this story include examples of misinformation on X (3:04) and a press release from a US Senator (2:56).

Again, youtuber norms are present. They include speaking directly to audiences in a conversational manner. The set is a room with a bookshelf in the background, and the wall is covered in military patches and other assorted items. References are made to previous Ryan McBeth videos (2:19), there is a sudden change in aspect ratio (4:04), and also a skit-based ad read (13:43). McBeth also explicitly directs audience members to his to his Substack account, his chosen platform for financial contributions from audience members (5:21). Each of these inclusions are normal on YouTube and would be out of place on a medium such as television.

The way sources and data are presented is common for serious youtubers. As sources or data are discussed they are displayed on screen, usually as a screenshot of the source. This provides transparency and lets the audience know where the information is coming from. In addition to showing sources on screen, in the video description, McBeth included links to a companion article on Substack, which has links to sources embedded within the text. The Substack companion article for this video also includes the raw data that McBeth used in his investigation of the anonymous X account that was spreading misinformation. That data is made available in four downloadable spreadsheet files that contain the raw data and data visualisation graphs.

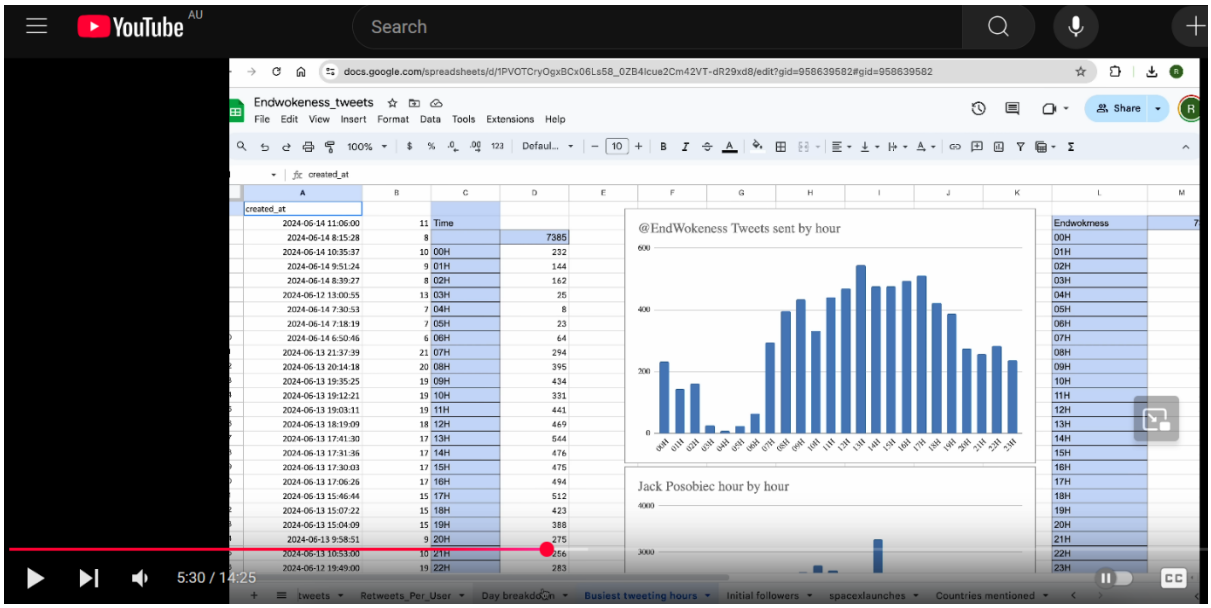

Figure 19. Data about the X account "End Wokeness" collected and used as part of McBeth's original investigation (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2024b).

This video is an original investigation into a popular and anonymous social media account that allegedly spreads misinformation. Based on this investigation, McBeth determined that the person behind the account was likely to be a prominent media personality who McBeth names in the video (12:20). There is no mention of right of reply in the video. However, McBeth said he had contacted the subject of the investigation and offered right of reply, however, McBeth said that the offer was declined (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023). This video informs the public about issues of public interest, and it holds power to account. As of 8 April 2026, this video had 1,512,946 views.

All nine of these videos fit the definition of public interest journalism adopted in this thesis. They perform democratic functions of journalism as they either inform the public about public interest issues, contribute to public sphere deliberation about public interest issues, or both. The

three friendlyjordies videos, and one Ryan McBeth video, go one step further and perform the democratic journalism function of holding power to account. They are original investigations into people in power. The norms and practices of serious youtubers are also evident in the nine videos analysed here.

5.5 Findings: Practitioners' views

Semi-structured interviews supplemented the video analysis. While analysing content can provide insight into the practices and ethical considerations of media producers, interviews can provide additional depth of understanding. As discussed in Chapter 4, each interviewee was asked about topics such as their motivations, processes, and ethical considerations. They were also asked about how they perceive themselves in a professional sense.

5.5.1 The journalist label: Non-journalists producing journalism

For each interviewee, the idea of being labelled a journalist was problematic. Despite feeling that the work of friendlyjordies plays a role in informing the Australian public about important issues, Langker rejected the label journalist. In his view, the word journalist is a discursive tool that is used to legitimate some people and delegitimate others. As Langker said, "it's such a nebulous term that I think is weaponised" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). Langker's observations align with articulations of journalism boundary work in the literature, such as the argument by Schapals that the boundaries between journalism and non-journalism "are based on discourse and rhetoric: through a process of constant discursive reiteration of what journalism

should or shouldn't be, journalistic actors are patrolling the boundaries of the field" (2024, p. 272).

Rather than labels, discourse or rhetoric, Langker said that actions should be the focus of attention and that "there's a lot of weight put on occupational terms, like producer and writer. In the end they don't really matter as much as your actions" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). Langker's official title of producer was adopted "because it was easy to use" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). When asked about his role he said, "I just look for stories and research them, write them, and then edit them with Jordan" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). Looking for newsworthy stories, doing research on them, writing them up, and editing them are all actions consistent with journalism as it is understood in this thesis. One possibility is that Langker is doing the work of a journalist and Shanks-Markovina's is doing the work of producer/presenter. In any case, as Langker said, job titles are not a priority at friendlyjordies.

Nonetheless, Langker said that "there are certain things that obviously make us journalists in a way. We've got ASIC [Australian Securities and Investments Commission] passes to do journalism searches. I've got court documents through journalist access" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). These passes are put to use in friendlyjordies investigations. Langker said, "When we were doing stuff on councils and developers for a bit, there'd be a lot of ASIC searching" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). He also said that they would do "court searches, looking at past files, and then there would be sources you call up and speak to. Just kind of traditional stuff like that. Then other stories like this Papua one, there's not much research you can do from a computer, you kind of just have to hop on a plane and go" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023).

Shanks-Markovina has also rejected the journalist label (Shanks-Markovina [IndependentAus], 2025). Throughout his youtuber career, he has also made clear his political preferences, including that he is pro-union and a supporter of the Australian Labor party. For traditional journalists, clearly expressing political opinions in this way could raise concerns of bias and lack of impartiality, especially if such opinions are seen to distort journalism publications. As scholars have noted, however, clearly expressed political opinions could be welcome in an age where "there is a requirement for transparency by the audience, and if journalists find the time and learn how to be transparent, they will be rewarded with trust" (Karlsson, 2021, p. 6).

Such transparency of political opinions is uncommon for traditional journalists. They are often required to "sacrifice – or at the very least limit – their individuality, opinion, voice, and privacy in service of the organisation" (Molyneux & Nelson, 2024, p. 942). While it may be unusual for a traditional journalist to make public their political opinions, it does not automatically follow that editorial independence, as expressed in this thesis (see 2.4), is compromised for a particular story because a journalist has previously expressed political opinions.

McBeth is conscious of his transition into producing journalism content. Unlike Shanks-Markovina, he makes a point of being apolitical in his videos, saying, "I don't talk about my politics. I'm a gun owner. That's about as far as my politics go" (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023). He often attends press events and regularly appears on television news (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2025, 2026). In contrast to Langker, he does not reject the label journalist outright. However, he does not completely embrace it for himself. He is flexible, even ambivalent, regarding his job title. McBeth doesn't mind being called a youtuber, he said:

> I'm still learning the whole journalism thing. And I think one of the issues with calling myself a journalist is that I don't have an editor I don't have a fact checker. So, I do all that stuff myself. It's one of the reasons why, when I do a video, I put all my sources in the pinned comments (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

Schasfoort from Money & Macro also had reservations about being labelled a journalist. Rather than accepting the journalist label, he said he was "an economics youtuber – explaining current events" (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023). While the channel started as an economics education channel, Schasfoort acknowledged that "the channel has transitioned a little bit more towards using economics to comment on current events" and that he saw his channel as "actually very similar to a video version of The Economist" (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023). So, while he does not embrace the label journalist, he views his content as a type of news media. As was seen in Chapter 4, this attitude is common among serious youtubers.

The motivations of the three YouTube creators interviewed for this chapter align with the democratic functions of journalism, especially that of informing the public about public interest issues. Langker said that the friendlyjordies channel "seems to have had some good effects on the country [Australia]" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). Specifically referring to the Paradise Bombed video, Langker said that a reason for doing the story was that "it's pretty important to Australia, it should be, because it's very, very close to Australia" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). The desire to share their knowledge, expertise and insights into newsworthy events and public interest issues is a major motivator for Langker, McBeth and Schasfoort.

For interviewees, the shift from purely educational content to content that focuses on current, newsworthy events, was driven by audience demand. As Schasfoort said:

> My content has evolved to become way more focused on current events, rather than educational stuff, because of YouTube. The fundamental [educational] stuff was very often hit or miss if some video did well or not. I asked people on my channel at some point, 'Why do you watch my channel?' I gave some options, one of them was to stay up to date on current events. And that was by far the most chosen option. So that's why I shifted towards that. And now I follow the news cycle, and post explainers around that (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

One possible explanation for the reluctance of these interviewees to accept the label journalist is that they are seeking to avoid the responsibility that is often seen to come with it. I have found this not to be the case. All three interviewees expressed willingness and desire to have high standards and produce videos ethically. This has been shown to be the case in their videos where high standards and ethical considerations are evident. The issue of ethics is discussed further in the next section.

5.5.2 Ethics

Ethical considerations are a key part of the public interest definition that has been used to assess these three YouTube channels. None of the channels of focus in this chapter has formalised codes of ethics. However, there are ethical considerations, as well as legal considerations, that go into their content production. For each channel, transparency of sources and protection of

human sources are major ethical considerations. Also, each interviewee expressed willingness to sign up to a code of ethics, whether that be some kind of youtuber code of practice, and/or a broader cross-platform standards scheme as discussed by Wilding & Molitorisz (2022).

Schasfoort leverages his experiences and ethics from his time as a university lecturer. He said:

> In academia you're taught to try to back up every somewhat controversial sentence with a credible source. So, I try to do that for all my videos as well. I post all the sources. That's what I try to do to stay out of trouble (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

Source transparency is a major area of ethical concern for McBeth as well. McBeth said, "I state all my sources, and I show where I got all my sources. So that way people can come to the same conclusions. By listing all your sources, it just makes your case stronger" (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

Publishing stories with verifiable facts is important for McBeth, but so is being accountable for what he publishes. He said, "When I make a mistake, I publish a correction" (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023). Schasfoort also issues corrections. An example of this is a video comment where he said, "Minor correction, the graph at 9:27 is about net millionaire departures (not arrivals)" (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2024b).

For Langker, key ethical considerations included giving people right of reply and "putting questions to people", making sure every fact is "sourced right" and, "if you've got a source, you always protect them" (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). This attitude towards

source protection fits squarely within the area of journalism ethics as is made clear in standard 3 of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) Journalist Code of Ethics which says, "Where confidences are accepted, respect them in all circumstances" (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, n.d.). McBeth made clear his view on source protection, he said, "I don't burn sources" (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023). He elaborated:

> I've interviewed guys doing videos about the army and they'll say, "Is this off the record?" And I say, "Everything you say is *on* the record." There's no such thing as off the record. But if you tell me don't repeat this, then I won't repeat it. And that's just because trust goes both ways that they have to trust me that I'm going to tell an accurate story and that I'm not going to burn them by saying something I shouldn't have said (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

Source protection is an area where the attitudes of interviewees differed little from ideals of traditional journalism practice. Protecting human sources has long been key part of ethical practice for traditional journalists. It has even been described by scholars as "a fundamental ethical obligation" for journalists (Ryan, 2014, p. 325). Source protections are often made explicit in journalists codes of ethics. For example, the 3rd standard in the MEAA's Journalist Code of Ethics states that "where confidences are accepted, respect them in all circumstances" (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, n.d.). Courts have even made clear the importance of journalist source protection such as when Justice Bromwich, in a 2023 Federal Court said, "The protection of the identity of journalists' sources has long been known as a matter of professional ethics and integrity. This is a matter of common knowledge" (*Al Muderis v Nine Network Australia Pty Limited*, [2023] FCA 1623, p. 9).

McBeth often does something that many journalists refuse to do. He sends his interviewees drafts of stories. As he said:

> Usually when I finished writing a story about how the military works, I actually send it to the people that I interviewed. I tell them straight up, You do not get editorial approval over this. But you 100% get technical approval. If I said something that's wrong, like, oh, the first brigade has 38 Apaches, and actually it's 48, yeah, correct me on that. You don't correct me on opinion. Correct me on technical details (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

Another ethical consideration raised by Langker, Schasfoort and McBeth, which aligns with traditional journalism standards, is the inclusion of various viewpoints in a story. Schasfoort said:

> I try to tell the truth. The truth is obviously, a very contentious thing. But I try to look at an issue from, not all sides, but most sides that I can. And I try to use credible sources for everything. And then I try to not give too much or too strong of an opinion, but still give an opinion, and I need to stand behind it (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

Serious youtubers, such as the interviewees in this chapter, have developed ethical standards that are remarkably in line with longstanding, often codified, journalist ethics. This is despite all of the serious youtubers interviewed for this thesis saying they had never thought about journalist ethics, let alone read any journalist codes of ethics. The two exceptions here are the Australian ex-journalists Michael West and John Cadogan, both of whom made comments claiming that such codes are frequently ignored by people in "the mainstream media". The high ethical standards of serious youtubers, according to

interviewees and observable in their content, was a surprising finding in this research. This finding is especially striking considering that serious youtubers Langker, Schasfoort, and McBeth are imposing these standards on themselves. There is no platform or regulatory body requiring such ethical practice.

A youtuber code of ethics

All three interviewees expressed willingness to sign up to some form of official code of conduct. This was especially the case if YouTube were to provide some recognition for signing up, and abiding by, such a scheme. McBeth posited that there could be a system on YouTube where a video uploader could tick a checkbox for videos that meet the standards of journalism. McBeth said:

> It probably wouldn't be a bad idea if you could literally have a checkbox that says "This video is worthy and is part of these journalistic standards." Maybe when you click that checkbox you're on a different level inside the algorithm. Maybe you get a pass on some of the "bad content" as well (R. McBeth, interview with author, September 18, 2023).

McBeth's reference to "bad content", is to the inclusion in videos of graphic or war footage, including explosions. Including such footage, even if blurred, generally results in videos being restricted, demonetised, or both. Algorithmic video restrictions, however, do not appear to apply when war footage is used in videos by large news media organisations. Rather, such content from news media organisations appears to be surfaced by the algorithm as it is promoted via the YouTube news filter. An example of this can be seen on the Associated Press where one video

"shows 4 captive Ukrainian troops killed by men identified as Russian forces" (Associated Press, 2025). This video opens with a content warning, and the worst of the killings has some blurring. However, as discussed in the previous chapter regarding perceptions of double standards and YouTube "censorship", independent youtubers do not feel that they can, in the words of McBeth, "get a pass" on such "bad content".

Schasfoort is positive about the idea of a code in general, and the specific idea of some kind of certification. He said:

> I think it could be a good thing. Especially if it has something like, "Hey, I vow to use sources to back up my statements", or "I do not have a sponsored influence in my content". Something like that I think that could work as a sort of a badge. That may be good, because there's a lot of misinformation out there. It's very difficult to separate it from information. So yeah, might be worth it (J. Schasfoort, interview with author, September 6, 2023).

Langker expressed support for the idea of a cross-platform code of practice that youtubers could sign up to. However, he had concerns that such a scheme would be used more to repress youtubers than support quality content creators, while at the same time major news organisations would be able to breach such a code without significant consequences (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). His scepticism originates from his belief that the journalist code of ethics from the MEAA is ineffective at promoting good practice by journalists (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023).

Langker, Schasfoort and McBeth seek to abide by clear ethical standards that are not dissimilar to generally accepted journalism codes of ethics. Moreover, as seen in the video analysis, these ideas of ethical video production are being put into practice: primary and secondary sources are given; the identities of human sources are protected; rights of reply are given; corrections are made; multiple viewpoints are sought; and there are efforts to minimise harm, including through the protection of privacy.

5.6 Conclusion

The nine videos analysed in this chapter are all examples of public interest journalism and the responses from interviewees reinforce this assessment. The stories in each video are public interest and newsworthy topics. The videos perform one or more of the democratic functions of journalism, which is a requirement for meeting the public interest journalism definition as defined in this thesis. The three YouTube channels are editorially independent from the topics covered in each of the videos. The videos report on, and analyse, fact-based and verifiable information, with efforts made to declare the sources of key pieces of information. The information included in the videos was collected from both primary and secondary sources, some of which were open source and others that needed investigation to bring them to light. The analysis in this chapter highlights the serious effort put into producing videos in an ethical manner. Four of the videos, one from Ryan McBeth and three from friendlyjordies, perform the democratic function of holding power to account. Each of these four videos investigated individuals of power. They are all exclusive and are based on original research. They all expose matters of serious public interest that were either obscured because of the complexity of the topic, such as in the video *Paradise Bombed*, or were deliberately concealed as is the case with the video *Who is End Wokeness?*

However, unlike journalism content from legacy news media corporations, the presentation of this journalism is that of a serious youtuber. This presentation style does not follow the long-standing norms of television news. The nine videos analysed in this chapter are examples of platform journalism on YouTube, where journalism is produced using the norms and affordances of the platform and which is created specifically for YouTube. By focussing on the democratic functions of journalism, this chapter moves beyond the dichotomy of real journalists versus peripheral journalistic actors where such distinctions are based on presentation elements and false assumptions of missing quality and ethics.

This is the first study to apply a democratic-functions definition of journalism to the analysis of independent content creators on YouTube. This was done by applying a definition of public interest journalism that includes the three core democratic functions of journalism: informing the public about public interest issues; facilitating public sphere deliberation; and playing a watchdog role on power.

This chapter demonstrated that a new form of journalism is emerging on YouTube – platform journalism. This is where journalism is created with a specific digital platform in mind, and where the creator adopts norms and practices of the platform. YouTube is an immense online environment, and numerous digital communities and video genres exist on the platform. So, for this thesis, the forms and practices of interest are those of the category of content creator discussed in the previous chapter – "serious youtuber". These include speaking to camera in a conversational manner, jump cut edits, and direct calls to action.

The concept of platform journalism clarifies an emerging category of content on digital platforms and paves the way for deeper assessments of the types of creators that have, to date, been categorised as journalistic creators or newsfluencers. The democratic functions approach, as demonstrated in this chapter, provides audiences a clear path be able to identify which of their favourite youtubers produce public interest journalism. It also provides audiences with a way to identify creators who do not meet such a threshold.

Chapter 6 – Platform journalism at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

6.1 Introduction: The ABCs of platform journalism

The previous chapter has shown that serious youtubers are producing public interest journalism. This is occurring in a media context where trust in traditional news media is low and people are increasingly turning to digital content creators (Park et al., 2025b, p. 85). For many Australians, the video-based platforms YouTube and TikTok are the platforms of choice with a reported 29% using YouTube for news and 14% using TikTok for news (Park et al., 2025b, p. 93). Whereas older people generally rely on news websites over social media platforms, the proportion of people using these platforms is particularly high among younger generations (Park et al., 2024, p. 11). And a key finding of the previous chapter was that public interest journalism, published by independent creators, exists on YouTube.

Shifting the focus away from independent youtubers, this chapter investigates whether the popularity of digital platforms, and their increasing use by news media organisations, is having an impact on journalism practice. More specifically, this chapter examines traditional journalists to understand just how their journalism practice is being influenced by the rise of independent platform journalism producers. The research question addressed in this chapter is: *How are journalists at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) influenced by serious youtubers and do they produce platform journalism?* Drawing on semi-structured interviews with traditional journalists from Australia's well-funded public broadcaster, this chapter argues that journalists at the ABC are producing platform journalism that is exploratory and that combines traditional newsroom practices with platform norms and practices, and that is successful.

As this chapter shows, the challenges of creating journalism content for video-focused platforms, such as YouTube, is bringing about changes to journalism practice. The journalism practices for television, radio, and text-based publications are well engrained in major news organisations, having been developed and entrenched over many decades. Examples of these practices include the inverted pyramid structure of news articles and the adherence to the news broadcast genre conventions such as wearing suits, speaking formally and recording in a television studio (Dunn, 2005, pp. 142–143, 151; Walters, 2017, p. 11). However, YouTube and TikTok are not television, radio, or text-based news articles. They are different mediums. For journalists to be successful on video-based social media platforms they need to create platform journalism. That is journalism is created using the norms and practices of creators on that platform (Hall, 2025, p. 98).

Journalism studies researchers are still working to understand journalist practices on social media. This chapter contributes to the literature on journalism practice by providing a detailed snapshot of the practices some traditional journalists are adopting for their videos on YouTube, as well as other platforms. This chapter also illuminates the motivations, strategies, and success of these journalists. It shows that traditional journalists are explicitly following the lead of serious youtubers, some of whom are producing platform journalism.

6.2 Literature review

Many news organisations recognise the challenges facing the traditional news media industry and are making attempts to adapt the practices of their journalists and to use social media to attract young audiences (Himma-Kadakas & Ferrer-Conill, 2022, p. 153). However, research findings are mixed, with many studies showing limited adjustment by news organisations for social media.

In many cases "adaptations" that are supposed to engage young people are simply, "disseminating news where they consume it, for example on social media" (Himma-Kadakas & Ferrer-Conill, 2022, p. 153). In other words, it is common for news organisations to just use social media platforms as tools for distributing news content that was originally created for other mediums. In some of these cases media organisations modify, or "remediate", existing news content so that it fits the platform on which it is republished (Verstappen & Opgenhaffen, 2024, p. 1015).

The degree to which traditional news media content is adapted for digital media is mixed, ranging from negligible to enthusiastic. In a large content analysis of thousands of articles and social media posts by Hase et al. (2023, p. 1514), German news outlets publishing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, showed "little evidence for news being adjusted in line with platform logics, at least on the level of journalistic content". In contrast, Hendrickx & Vázquez-Herrero (2024, p. 1067) found, in their sample of nine news organisations from three European countries, that the affordances of TikTok and Instagram, such as emojis and split screens, were "readily operationalised". Other adaptions of news content for social media include making it more "playful and game-like" (Ferrer-Conill et al., 2020, p. 458). News content is made playful as a strategy to have it "distributed virally" and so that it "can easily influence younger audiences" and gain the "prize" of audience engagement (Ferrer-Conill et al., 2020, p. 459). Methods employed to win this so-called prize include integrating into journalism "interactive games" and automated "smart assistants" (Ferrer-Conill et al., 2020, p. 462).

The mixed approaches of journalists and media organisations are unsurprising. Social media is a broad category that includes a large variety of digital platforms, each with its own affordances and digital subcultures. Also, journalism practitioners and news media organisations are diverse

even within a single media market. Studies such as that of Tindi & Kwode (2025, p. 12) show how some traditional news organisations barely focus on social media platforms while others take "a battery of actions in response to digitisation's impact", including creating a large amount of YouTube news content.

The professional identity of traditional journalists who moved onto social media adds further complexity to attempts to analyse journalism on social media. In her research involving interviews with journalists and analysis of their publications, Bossio argued that self-representation by journalists on social media "occurs within a continuum of practices that develop over time" and while journalists can adapt journalism practices to platforms, they also have an opportunity to explore new practices "within a distinct platform culture" (2023, p. 1786). Other studies have found that professional journalists perform their identities on social media on "a spectrum from professional to personal" (Mellado & Hermida, 2022, p. 293). This performance of identities is not unlike the findings in Chapter 4 of serious youtubers constructing and presenting their "authentic" selves in their videos about newsworthy topics. In this dynamic environment, journalism practice on social media platforms can vary even among individual journalists from the same media organisation.

Journalism practices on social media, including on YouTube, are inconsistent. The adoption of platform norms and common practices ranges wildly. Research also shows that the nature of media organisations can influence the level of adaption to social media norms and practices, with private companies and digital first media organisations more likely to adapt content to suit social media platforms (Anter, 2026, p. 1534; Hågvar, 2019; Hendrickx, 2023b). This chapter challenges these previous findings and demonstrates that the ABC, which is a public broadcaster

rather than a private company, is making great strides in successfully adapting journalism practices to digital video platforms.

6.3 Method

To understand how ABC journalists are influenced by serious youtubers, this chapter used qualitative semi-structured interviews. The sample selection process began with close observations of the YouTube channels of major Australian news organisations to learn whether any of their content was applying norms and affordances of the platform. The YouTube channels observed were Sky News Australia, Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, ABC News Australia, and ABC News In-Depth. The videos and Shorts of each channel were observed between March and June 2024.

The findings drawn from these observations were that the majority of journalistic content from major Australian news organisations on YouTube is repurposed, or remediated, material that was originally made for television. Little effort was made to adopt or adapt platform norms or common practices and videos had little resemblance to those of the serious youtubers previously discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. On the relatively rare occasions that videos are created specifically for YouTube, they still follow what many of their international peers do by adhering to "traditional and institutionalised journalism standards in both production approach and content elements" (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2019, p. 237). The rare exceptions were several ABC journalists.

From these observations an initial shortlist of traditional journalists was made. For the purposes of this chapter, "traditional journalist" refers to a person working in media production for a

news organisation with the job title of journalist, reporter, or similar. Traditional journalists were selected based on video content that they produced which displayed features of the norms and common practices of serious youtubers as described in Chapter 4 (see 4.4.1). These include casual presentation, over-the-top graphics on thumbnails and jump cuts. These features are part of the grammar of youtuber content, but they are far from standard for traditional journalism practice. Several of the identified ABC journalists published YouTube Shorts which are videos created in the portrait, or vertical, aspect ratio. This led me to also observe their publications on TikTok and Instagram as they also published on those platforms. James Morrow from News Corp was also identified as suitable for inclusion in this study as he had launched his own channel on YouTube.

As this initial sample pool proved to be very small, I expanded the sample pool to include people such as Matilda Boseley from the *Guardian* who had won a Walkley award for her work on TikTok as well as journalists who had had interactions with, or had written about, independent platform journalism producers. As such, a secondary selection criterion was added, to incorporate Australian journalists who had published extensively about the YouTube channel friendlyjordies such as Kate McClymont, Cam Wilson, and Chris Kenny. Ultimately, four journalists from the ABC and one from the SBS agreed to, and took part in, interviews. However, the SBS interviewee provided insights that largely sat outside the scope of this chapter as their role had moved away from journalism production to strategy and training. Therefore, this interview has been excluded from the analysis.

The chapter is therefore limited to the experiences and opinions of four journalists working for the ABC. This means that journalists working for News Corp, Nine or any other organisation, including small and regional outlets, may have completely different views and approaches.

Moreover, the limited sample size means that claims made in this chapter cannot be generalised to cover the experiences or opinions of everyone at the ABC, let alone the official stance of the public broadcaster. However, the interviewees in this chapter are seasoned journalists and leaders in digital media production at the ABC and have worked with other organisations. Indeed, their insights are highly valuable, due to their extensive experience, which I detail below. They are well placed to provide key insights into platform journalism production at the ABC. Importantly, while representing only three ABC teams, these teams are the main platform journalism producers at the ABC. As I will detail, many of the insights gained from these interviewees are likely to be applicable to other mainstream news media outlets.

Interviews with Paul Barry, Matt Bevan, Amal Wehbe and Grace McKinnon were conducted between July and October 2024. Audio recordings from the interviews were first auto-transcribed using transcribing software. Transcripts were then manually checked and analysed alongside the audio recordings. Interviewees were sent direct quotes used in this chapter on 23 May 2025 to provide the opportunity to clarify or update their original quotes if needed. The interviewees represent three teams within the ABC. Barry is from the *Media Watch*/*Media Bites* team. Bevan is from *If You're Listening*. Wehbe and McKinnon are from the vertical video team.

6.3.1 Paul Barry – *Media Bites*

Barry has had a long and distinguished journalism career that started in the late 1970s. He has worked as a presenter on current affairs programs for Channel 7, and worked as an investigative reporter for the ABC, Nine Network, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *Sunday Telegraph*. Barry has also won two Walkley awards and a Logie for his journalism work. His work on *Media Bites* demonstrated his willingness to adapt to online video. *Media Bites* ran for more than eight years

with its last video published on 5 December 2024 (ABC News (Australia), 2024). The show published videos on YouTube that were about media related controversies, and it was an offshoot of the longer running television program *Media Watch*, which continues with host Linton Besser, who took over in 2025. *Media Bites* was presented in relaxed manner with Barry often leaning, without a jacket and tie, on a desk while talking to camera, with a cluttered office for a background. Additionally, the show often included over the top graphics, sound effects, jokes, and skits (Figure 20).



*Figure 20. Examples of graphics and skits on Media Bites (*ABC News (Australia)*, n.d.).*

6.3.2 Matt Bevan – *If You're Listening*

Matt Bevan joined the ABC in 2008 where he has presented on radio, podcasts, and more recently, on YouTube with *If You're Listening*. This YouTube program was adapted from the existing, long running podcast of the same name. In the YouTube version, youtuber elements are clearly on display and include exaggerated thumbnails, a background full of assorted items,

coloured background lighting, and video edits that include jump cuts (Figure 21). Topics covered by the program generally focus on politics and international relations.



Figure 21. Lighting and background consistent with youtuber norms (ABC News In-depth, 2025).

6.3.3 Grace McKinnon and Amal Wehbe – vertical video team

Vertical video refers to videos made in portrait rather than landscape format. At the ABC, the vertical video team create original, platform appropriate, vertical news videos for the broadcaster's accounts on YouTube, TikTok and Instagram Reels (Figure 22). Amal Wehbe and Grace McKinnon have been with the ABC's vertical video team since its founding. The team is made up of three journalists, including Wehbe and McKinnon, as well as a managing editor, and a number of people who edit videos supplied by journalists from across the ABC as well as from ABC television (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). McKinnon is also an inaugural member of the ABC Next Gen Advisory Panel, where she provides advice on how the ABC can improve content and make it more impactful for young Australians.

Wehbe and McKinnon have direct control over each stage of production for their videos. This is unlike Barry and Bevan who do not, for example, edit or upload videos themselves. As such, McKinnon and Wehbe have insights into the whole process of publishing platform journalism. Also, the vertical video team publishes more than 70 video per week across three platforms. This is a contrast to the one video per week from *If You're Listening* and the two or three videos per week from *Media Bites*.

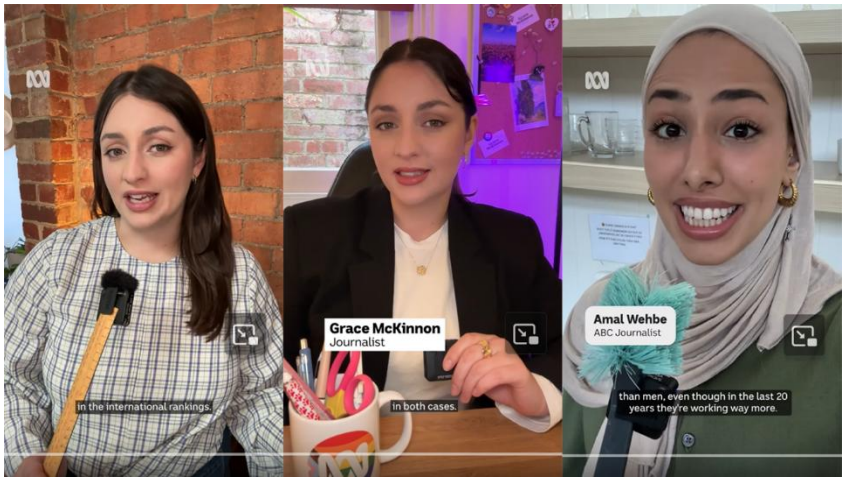

*Figure 22. McKinnon and Wehbe going "full platform" with non-standard microphone use (*ABC Australia [@ABC], *n.d.).*

6.4 Findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses key interview insights. While the teams are different and independent of one another, their experiences, insights, and opinions have significant overlap in terms of their production. Discussions of interview findings are presented in the following five subsections: video-based digital platforms are the place to be; experimenting in search of young audiences; adopting platform norms and practices; traditional journalism practices and support retained; and platform journalism success at the ABC.

6.4.1 Video-based digital platforms are the place to be

Video news on digital platforms is popular with Australian audiences (Park et al., 2025b, p. 84). The interviewees in this chapter are aware of this, and they said they tailor their content to match the platforms. As Wehbe said:

> People will always seek out news in one form or another. That's just human nature. It's just the way they're seeking out information is different. I think people get too hung up on the actual platform itself, rather than realising it's just about responding to what the audience wants (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

Echoing the interviewees in Chapter 4, the ABC interviewees all said video content needs to be created with YouTube in mind for it to be successful and find audiences on the platform. Treating YouTube as merely a place of distribution, or purely a marketing funnel, is not likely to land well with an audience. Bevan said the strategy of using social media as a marketing tool to funnel audiences to a news website is flawed and outdated:

> News organisations used to look at social media as a way of lassoing people and dragging them to traditional media outlets. Newspapers used to try and get people to look at a tweet and then go and buy a newspaper. Or to look at a tweet and then go and turn on the radio or watch a TV show. They've finally realised that doesn't really work. You cannot drag people from one medium to another. So, we're going to make content that lives on those platforms and stays there and count those YouTube viewers as audience for the ABC rather than just counting YouTube views as marketing opportunity (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

McKinnon and Wehbe said traditional media often get it wrong. According to McKinnon, "Most traditional broadcasts in Australia take a bit of a cheat code with YouTube and just put up what's made for TV a lot of the time" (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024). McKinnon and Wehbe said that rather than just uploading clips from television, there is a need to understand that different platforms require different approaches, and that digital video is not a one-sized-fits-all activity. For example, they said that on TikTok, there is more of a focus on publishing about trending issues, or issues that are in the current 24-hour news cycle. Wehbe said that for vertical videos (those with a portrait aspect ratio) on TikTok, Shorts, and Reels:

> There needs to be a sense of relevancy. So, if it is something that takes months and months to work on, that sense of relevancy is a lot harder to prove, whereas if there's a law changing this week, it's a lot easier for the audience to have a buy in (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

By contrast, on YouTube longer-form videos with a landscape aspect ratio are more appropriate. She said, "On YouTube, you might seek out things that are more standalone and not necessarily as current" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

Interviewees said that their focus is on giving audiences what they want rather than focusing on the platform technology or pleasing an algorithm. Interviewees also said that when creating video for digital platforms, a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate and that it should not be thought of as a binary with digital video on one side and traditional television on the other. Both Wehbe and McKinnon said that each of the platforms they publish on, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, have slight variations in norms and common practices. To be successful on a platform, these norms and practices need to be understood. For example, Wehbe said that for YouTube and TikTok, the algorithm presents videos to "whoever", so it is an imperative to have a strong "hook", whereas with Instagram Reels "most people that see your video follow the

account, so they already have a buy in. You don't need to work as hard to grab them in that first half second, because they already trust you" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

6.4.2 Experimenting in search of young audiences

The platform-first approaches of the three ABC teams are the result of a combination of management instructions, and the creativity and initiative of the team members involved. Management at the broadcaster desired video content from these teams to be created specifically for digital platforms as a way of reaching audiences, particularly younger audiences. The teams were given little in the way of guidance and resources other than their time and creative freedom. With that they experimented, adapted, and learned from what independent platform creators were already doing.

As the teams developed, and their success became more apparent, they received more resources. These resources included digital cameras to replace phones, as well as access to dedicated video editors. Despite these increases in resourcing, the three teams included in this chapter remain extremely low cost and resource-light compared to teams that require studios, television cameras, and other significant equipment and human resources.

When *Media Bites* videos were first published in 2017, Paul Barry and the *Media Watch* team were given no significant additional resources and filmed the early videos on a phone in the newsroom office. As such the format costs far less than a typical studio-produced television programs. Over time they experimented with different office set designs, upgraded the phone camera to a digital camera, and expanded their over-the-top graphics and comedy skits. Barry said:

> We were essentially told that we needed to do something more for a younger audience, to go digital, get online. So, we suggested this [*Media Bites*] as a way of just doing a couple of quick stories a week (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024).

As with *Media Bites*, the creation of the YouTube version of *If You're Listening* was a decision that came from the top, and early efforts were exploratory. Bevan said:

> It was management. There'd been a lot of strategic discussions about the need to get into YouTube as a place where a large number of Australians get their news and are entertained. And the ABC was looking at existing brands and products that could be transitioned fairly simply into being on YouTube. We spent six months part time, while working on other things, figuring out how best to achieve that. And we made a whole bunch of pilot episodes. We gradually increased the complexity of what we were doing. The early episodes were me filming on this webcam or on my phone and then overlaid with graphics that I made in paint. It was really low-tech stuff (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

Bevan said the home studio setup was flexible and convenient:

> We experimented a little bit with green screens, but we eventually decided that putting this little shelf of paraphernalia behind me and putting up these posters made it interesting. And we've invested a couple of thousand dollars on a camera and a few lights. It's incredibly cheap to make the set in terms of a TV program. I had some room in my house that we could use, and so we built it here, which is actually really helpful, because even if I was in Sydney and working in the Ultimo building, then you find that you have to slot in with other programs. Whereas I can record episodes here

> whenever they're ready, and do little pickups, so it's really convenient. The last few episodes we've ended up recording at 10 o'clock at night because we've been trying to react to the US news cycle (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

The vertical video team at the ABC was set up in 2022, initially on a trial basis with a view to better reach younger audiences (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). Wehbe said, "I feel like ABC made a decision that we don't have enough young people, and young people seem to be getting their news on TikTok" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). Wehbe added:

> When we started, we weren't really trained to create TikTok news content, because nobody had done it before. We had the framework from the ABC Editorial Policies, but we had to figure out how to apply those in the context of news for young people on TikTok (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

While *Media Bites* and *If You're Listening* are programs that cover specific themes and topics, the vertical video team is focused on timeliness, and on covering stories in the immediate 24-hour news cycle. However, the vertical video team was also initiated by ABC management in order to reach new, younger, audiences.

The task of the vertical video team was large, and something that had not been attempted at the ABC before. Early on, McKinnon said, the team had "spoken a lot about how to make it not TV" (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024). When content was supplied to them by ABC journalists working outside the vertical video team, McKinnon said that the presentation norms of television news were a liability for digital video. As with the serious youtubers interviewed in Chapter 4, perceptions of authenticity are essential. To make sure

footage from television teams was fit for purpose, the team would "edit videos to make them sound less like a 'traditional broadcast' voice" and make it "authentic to the space, which is the real challenge" (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

From the very start the vertical video team was experimental, although it took some time for the team to realise how much control they had. Wehbe said:

> I remember being unsure how to deliver news in this new format. I found it so daunting. It wasn't until three or four months down the line where I realised this is a space to experiment. And then it changed from this stressful thing to this really exciting thing because this is new, we can make it whatever we want. That's when I really started to enjoy it and experiment with different video formats and creating more original stories (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

Initially, the team would take existing stories from the ABC's website and repurpose them for publication as vertical videos (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). However, as the team matured Wehbe said, "We started doing our own original stories, just like the way you would in a normal newsroom, speaking to your contacts and things like that" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). The picture that emerges is one of a new hybrid approach emerging out of experimentation, platform norms and traditional journalism practices.

The vertical video team's innovation and experimentation was driven by the team's understanding of their target platforms. Wehbe said, "You can't be rigid in a space like this, in a space that's so ever changing. This is a team that is willing to try new things and make mistakes, and sometimes videos completely flop" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). In

the early days of the team there was an assumption that very short videos were better than longer ones. That turned out to not exactly be the case. Wehbe said, "Over time, TikTok has made it very clear that they're trying to prioritise longer form videos. And we see that that's the case" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

For the vertical video team, the target for video length is between one and two minutes (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024). In this regard, TikTok's reputation as a short form video platform, is somewhat unfair. As McKinnon said:

> Probably 90 seconds is my average. And you know what? That's actually the same as a TV package, which I think a lot of people don't realise. I get a lot of people saying, "Oh but how can you deliver a news package in that time? It's too short". I often tell them their TV package is shorter than mine (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

6.4.3 Adopting platform norms and practices

The video content that each team produces is heavily inspired by independent content creators. Indeed, the interviewees were open and explicit about their adoption of content creator norms and practices. *Media Bites* and *If You're Listening* borrowed from youtubers; the vertical video team borrowed from both YouTube and TikTok creators.

The creator norms and practices adopted by ABC interviewees were focused on aesthetics, presentation, and editing. These include jump cuts, over-the-top graphics, casual presentations and non-studio sets. The aesthetics, presentation, and editing are important considerations and

shape how information is communicated to audiences and how well received videos are. Interviewees made clear that these considerations are important to ensure that the final video presentation fits the platform on which it is published and meets the expectations of audience on those platforms. The interviews clearly revealed that, casual, non-corporate, aesthetics were essential for success on YouTube specifically, and for vertical video more generally.

The requirement for casual presentation does not mean that there is no planning or that the videos are ad hoc. On the contrary, as was shown to be the case in Chapter 4 for serious youtubers, a lot of thought and planning is needed in order to create quality videos that are presented in a casual way that maintains audience interest. This planning includes topic research, script writing, clothing and set decisions, and, significantly, newsroom editorial processes.

These may be journalists working for traditional media, but when it came to presentation and aesthetics, all three teams actively applied youtuber norms and common practices. Youtuber production norms and practices were consciously adopted for *Media Bites*. Barry said:

> We shot it in the office because we didn't have a studio, and it seemed sensible to do it informally. And it seemed like it would be fun to do something completely different. I guess we were copying what other people do online anyway, making it look like it's citizen journalism, or whatever you like. Gradually, we've decorated the set more. While we started filming on a phone, we now film it on quite a sophisticated, small camera. Why do we do it that way? Look, it's fun and it's supposed to be fun for the people who watch it. And we were given advice in the early stages that there were three or four acronyms. So, one would be OMG, another one would be WTF. Another one would be FFS (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024).

Bevan also deliberately adopted youtuber presentation style and aesthetics. Bevan said:

> It was just replicating the style that you see on YouTube from lots of people, an interesting, dimly lit background with some knickknacks, paraphernalia, posters on the wall. It was a mixture of figuring out what we could achieve to look something like what you see on YouTube but also using the space that we have in my house, and the budget that we have (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

As with *Media Bites*, part of the motivation for decisions around presentation style and aesthetics was based on having a limited budget and making use of whatever was on hand. Critically, the youtuber style also allows for a fast turnaround, because it does not require the same degree of polish as traditional television. Mistakes can be papered over. In other words, Bevan's adoption of youtuber norms such as jump cuts and graphic overlays was not just because they were youtuber norms, but for practical and budgetary reasons. As Bevan said:

> TV generally takes a lot longer to make. But making a 15-minute episode of TV with the resources that we have is not really feasible. We do it at speed, and we are able to use either B-roll, or other clips, or those little zooms [axial cuts], to hide my flub lines (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

These practical and budgetary motivations are shared by the serious youtuber interviewees in Chapter 4. Engineering youtuber Hillhouse expressed this common experience when he said that allocating money and resources to production quality was not a high priority for him and that audience on YouTube are quite forgiving when it comes to production quality (G. Hillhouse, interview with author, October 19, 2023).

Having comments turned on is seen as a way to improve the reach of a video, though moderation produces some legal and wellbeing issues. Wehbe said, "I find managing comments to be a mixed bag. Sometimes they're really enjoyable and just funny to see, but, there are also people who just post unnecessary nasty comments" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

If You're Listening began with the common creator attitude that places a high importance on building an audience relationship via engagement in the comment section of videos. While comments were turned on in the early days, they no longer are, and comment sections that were previously open are no longer so. The primary reason given was a lack of resources for moderation. Bevan said:

> The issue with comments is that we need to moderate them, and early on, it wasn't seen as much of an issue. But following the October 7 attacks in Israel, we found the comment section was unmanageable in terms of the vitriol that was being thrown from both sides, and because we post on a Saturday, we don't have staff on the weekend to moderate the comments for the first 48 hours. It's our inability to moderate it which is the reason they're not on (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

While some engagement with audiences in comment sections is generally considered to be important for a YouTube channel, Bevan said, "It's just easier to not allow comments, and it also doesn't seem to have a massive effect on our engagement" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

As was the case with *If You're Listening*, moderation resources are an issue for the vertical video team, though for now comments are kept on for videos, at least initially. McKinnon said:

> We don't have a lot of resources for moderation. It's a small team. There're often only a few people on at a time. We can flag highly sensitive posts. Ideally, we want to keep comments on because it's better for engagement, and it'll actually make the video views increase. We don't turn comments off unless we have to, or are required to prevent contempt of court. Usually, I'll turn comments off my videos when I log off for the day, and sometimes I'll turn them on the next day so I can moderate them during work hours if I want the video to do a bit better, because I know it'll do better (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

Approaching their work from the perspective of "authentic" audience-focused creators has been central to what the vertical video team does. The vertical video team consciously adopts platform norms and typical social media techniques. McKinnon said, "We haven't just looked at how we make TV different, we've looked into youtubers and other online creators" (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024). Just as the youtuber interviewees did in Chapter 4, McKinnon emphasised that it is important to present in ways that are casual, non-corporate and authentic. McKinnon said:

> There's a lot of thought put into presentation. I know that a lot of creators put so much effort into their environment and what they're producing, and to make things sound casual, even though it's scripted. Lately I have been thinking a lot about how I dress. I have a lot of "news clothes". But, how do I not look like a News TV presenter, on vertical, on social media? I think a lot about my accessories and my jewellery and my makeup, like, how does it look? Does it look like I could walk out in the street in

> it, or does it look like I'm about to go on TV? (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

McKinnon said, people who go to digital platforms for news are not looking for a television experience. McKinnon said:

> Traditional broadcast videos don't trend well. Generally, people don't want TV on their mobiles, and it feels like they're being talked down to, which I agree. I would rather someone who looks like me, or at least I could imagine seeing in the street dressed in casual clothes to explain something to me in a way that I'd understand it (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

A big part of not looking like a news presenter is the background setting. McKinnon said:

> The background is really important. If I can, I'll try not to shoot in the news studio. Even though the lights are really good in there (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

For the vertical video team, their approach includes placing wireless microphones in unusual places (Figure 22), McKinnon said:

> We often try to put the mic somewhere a bit silly, so it just looks a bit more creator, a bit more "full platform". Sometimes I like using the ABC mic, but I feel like it needs to suit the space because sometimes it just looks too much (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

The vertical video team's use of platform norms to engage audiences can also be seen in the story structure of their videos. Wehbe said:

> There're a few tools you can use to hook them in. You can use the text hook, as we call it, which is the text on screen. Or you can use a visual hook. If there's a really grabbing photo or video you put that on the whole screen, or, a split screen with your face there (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

McKinnon also said having a strong hook is important to catch the audience's attention immediately. This makes an important contrast to a television package. McKinnon said:

> You want the strongest thing first. That's almost the opposite of a TV package. Often, they'll tease something small, and often it's a very slow intro, and they save their best to last because they see that as why people will keep watching, but they don't share what that is early on (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

By focusing on audience, Wehbe said she can improve the videos she publishes, and ultimately receive more views. The real-time feedback on the performance of videos, compared to television, plays an important role in this. This audience focus and insights from analytics influences scripting and production. Wehbe said:

> You don't want to waste anybody's time, or they're going to scroll. So, you need to be really good at filtering out information that's irrelevant. It is a hard balance, because you obviously can't just get rid of all the boring bits, because then it might be unfactual or misleading, or you might open yourself to legal risk. You need to be careful. I need to make sure I give the audience all the facts, so they understand the story. It makes you really good at cutting through scripts, understanding what people care about,

> understanding what they don't care about. It makes you very audience focused, because there's such a tangible result to your stories (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

Another example Wehbe gave of experimentation with audience-focused activities is "going live". Wehbe said, "We play the videos that have already been uploaded on our account, on the live stream, and I chat in between them. I talk to people in the comments. It's really connected to the audience" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

As is the case with a lot of content creators, McKinnon and Wehbe do a lot of the work themselves. Wehbe said:

> It's just easier if we do it ourselves. We know the vision that we want. Also, if you have a bit of a drier story where it's not really interesting on the surface, in your head, you're thinking, "Okay, I'm really going to need to elevate this in the editing with those typical social media techniques." You know, doing jump cuts and sound effects (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

McKinnon highlights the differences between traditional speaking for television news and speaking in online videos. The idea of speaking to the camera as though you are speaking to a friend is very much a youtuber norm. McKinnon said:

> There's a misconception that a news voice, which is usually slow and low, is the clearest form of communication. But I argue that that means we get a lot of older men on TV. And often, if you have a young presenter with a high-pitched voice, you won't see her on a commercial channel because it doesn't have any news authority. And I think we package that as, "Oh no, this just isn't a good news voice," but actually, it's

> riddled with misogyny. Broadcast news takes men more seriously on TV, or just in general, which is a reflection on our patriarchal society. Now we're looking at an approach where you present news how you would talk to a friend. You can still put in practice those principles of talking clearly and not too fast, and people can understand you. I know I have a few accent quirks, like most Australians do, and I know some people would absolutely hate that, but I think that's fine, because we live in a country that has all these strange accent quirks (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

The vertical video team is learning as they go, and their lessons are being shared with others in the ABC. One lesson being learned from the vertical video team is the camera angle. McKinnon said:

> The camera angle is really important. For TV the camera is flat. Whereas when you hold a phone, it is always tilted a bit forward. You can see a big difference. It feels more like the person recording is not a trained camera operator. Now a lot of the camera operators are getting trained for vertical video (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

As for many serious youtubers, all the ABC interviewees shoot to edit. That is, a lot of thought goes into the editing process even before the video is shot. McKinnon said:

> We're very careful about where our head is placed. We think about where our text on screen will go and where our captions will be. You can't have dead space. Or are you planning to fill it with the overlay? With news sources? There's a lot to think about, and it is terrible when you forget an element, and then in the editing phase you have to make up for it (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

As is a standard practice for serious youtubers, the vertical video team actively engages with audiences in the comments. This is in contrast to the *Media Bites* and *If You're Listening* teams, both of which have comments turned off. The three dedicated journalists of the team are responsible for moderating the comments of the videos that they publish themselves (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024). Wehbe said:

> You check the comments to delete and report any hateful or abusive comments or anything like that, or any that have a defamation risk. But I think all of us are always just curious about people's reception of the stories (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

While many creator presentation and aesthetic practices have been adopted by these ABC teams, there are important serious youtuber norms that are largely or wholly absent. These are related to the youtuber business model and source transparency. As a public broadcaster, the ABC has strict rules concerning advertising and sponsorships, which means calls to action to provide financial support or buy merchandise are constrained. However, they have no such restrictions on source transparency practices. In the descriptions of ABC videos, there are no hyperlinked lists of sources. This is unlike the serious youtubers interviewed in Chapter 4, all of whom said that source transparency is a major ethical issue.

6.4.4 Traditional journalism practices and support retained

While youtuber presentation and aesthetic norms were adopted by all three teams, important behind-the-scenes practices of traditional journalism were maintained. *Media Bites*, the offshoot of the more serious and well-established weekly TV program *Media Watch*, was able to draw on

the *Media Watch* team of about six people (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024). The team held regular "story meetings" where they decided what to include in *Media Bites* videos (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024). While the typical newsroom practice of editorial meetings was maintained for *Media Bites*, however, the program did not receive the same automatic legal review as its big sibling, with *Media Watch* reviewed by ABC lawyers as "a matter of process" (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024). This is another DIY element adopted by all three teams. Barry said:

> We don't legal it. I've spent years in producing stories that need to be legalled. So, I have a pretty good idea of what's defamatory and what not defamatory, and what we can get away with and can't get away with. And so far, touch wood, we haven't had any problems with *Media Bites*. It's also lower profile. So, I don't think anybody's quite so concerned about it (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024).

Bevan's journalism practice includes involving the organisation's lawyers, especially when the video topic is about crime (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024). However, he makes the point that his show generally has minimal risk as the topics are usually based on events outside Australia. Bevan said, "The amount of legal wrangling that we do increases exponentially the closer to Australia we get in terms of the topic that we're covering" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

While McKinnon and Wehbe clearly adopt typical content creator practices, they maintain other practices that would be very familiar for traditional television or radio journalists. Wehbe said, "Every morning we have our editorial meeting, similar to a normal newsroom" (A. Wehbe,

interview with author, August 15, 2024). Reflecting on her past work as a reporter, McKinnon said:

> The story development process is probably the same as working in a digital team, or when I was at the paper. Most journalists come up with their own pitch. You pitch that to an editor; they approve the pitch. You start putting it together, you write. You might check in with them; see if you have enough sources. Then you write out your article, in our case our script, then get it checked by the editor again. We're following very traditional broadcast principles. And then you record it, and then again, get it looked at. If it's a legally sensitive story, the script and final production goes to the legal team (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

Wehbe also talked of how the vertical video team makes use of the ABC legal department when needed. Wehbe said that "you just write the script in a way where you avoid legal risks. But sometimes, if it's a criminal story we'll reach out to the ABC legal team, they'll check the script to make sure there's not a legal risk, or you're breaching any court orders" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024).

Legal issues regarding audience comments were of particular concern for all interviewees. McKinnon said:

> There are legal ramifications, for example, if the video is about an open court case it's almost impossible to keep the comments open, because you are liable for every single one of those comments. It could be something as small as someone commenting saying, "Oh, I know that guy. He was an asshole, yeah?" And he's up for some charge and because of this comment you're liable. So, anything with courts and crime, if it

> hasn't been sentenced and the court case has been closed, it's usually safer to keep comments closed, because if you miss one and someone screenshots something like that you can be in contempt of court (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

Comments are not only moderated to "make the video do better", or to avoid legal issues. An important consideration when moderating is minimising harm for story subjects, individuals in the audience, as well as the journalists themselves. Practices around harm minimisation are a well understood part of traditional journalist practice and often a key part of journalism codes of ethics (Thomas, 2018, pp. 223, 230). McKinnon said:

> We have a duty to, where possible, minimise the harm that putting a story out will cause someone. So that means moderating comments and being careful with them. I only ever want to have eyes on one or two videos to moderate at a time. So that's a big one. It's minimising harm to people, and sometimes it's also minimising harm to reporters as well. Some reporters are targeted more than others. It's usually women, people of colour and people who are disabled. They get targeted more in comments than anyone else. So that's really hard (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

If You're Listening has significant organisational support and a dedicated team centred around Bevan and his main producer, with other people supporting the program on a part-time basis including "a graphics person, and two video producers who work in the news channel team, they have incorporated producing our show into their weekly workflow" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

Regarding his journalism practice and process, Bevan said for the YouTube program his workflow has been impacted little by the introduction of a camera and house office set. He said that it is "basically what I would do if I was on ABC radio. I'm doing the same procedures and the same content that I would be making if I was making a radio show" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024). These procedures include researching a story, script writing, and recording. However, there have been some changes, the most obvious being that he now speaks to camera and has to consider visual aesthetics (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

The *If You're Listening* program is broadcast on television as well as being published on YouTube. The audio from the show is broadcast on radio and published as podcast episodes. However, Bevan does not see the program as a television or radio broadcast. This show is an example of a news media organisation producing YouTube-first videos and then broadcasting the videos on television, broadcasting the audio on radio and publishing the audio as a podcast. This runs counter to the common practice of news organisation republishing television programs on YouTube.

Unlike independent youtubers, Bevan and the *If You're Listening* program has strong editorial and institutional support at the ABC. Bevan said that "everything that we do is referred to my boss, and then he will occasionally refer things up to higher bosses. It doesn't happen very often that we run into problems" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024). A major benefit of this kind of support is made clear by Bevan when he said that "if the work that you are doing is approved by your media organisation, then your media organisation will go all out to protect

you" (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024). Such protection is completely absent for independent youtubers.

Bevan also has access to the ABCs internal archive of historical events as well as other archives that the ABC has copyright agreements with (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024). Here too Bevan and his team at the ABC have an advantage over independent youtubers. Rather than having access to archives of audio-visual material, youtubers interviewed for Chapter 4 said they paid for media licencing, spent a lot of time searching for copyright free material, or just used copyrighted material and risked lawsuits and/or demonetisation.

While the vertical video team have adopted many creator practices that are novel for newsrooms, certain production principles remain unchanged for good audio-visual content. McKinnon said:

> Sound is so important. I still see so many vertical videos coming from news teams outside the ABC that won't use a mic. They use a phone mic. And it is so important to have good sound. Although everything's made to look casual, and it's filmed with a phone, the sound quality needs to be really high (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

The journalists in this study combine traditional newsroom practices with production elements that are common on video-based social media platforms. Traditional newsroom practices that are maintained with the three teams are largely related to story development and vetting by legal teams. Stories are pitched in editorial meetings, research is done, scripts are written and checked, and videos are rechecked before publication. The benefit of being part of a major news media organisation also includes institutional knowledge that comes in the form of well-developed

policies and procedures, as well as that knowledge that comes from individual experience of senior staff. Interviewees gave examples of this experience when they said they write scripts to be legally safe. Organisational support that the teams receive also includes access to archives. A much more significant area of support is access to the ABC's legal teams. This contrasts with the independent youtubers interviewed for Chapter 4 who do not have access to in-house legal teams and, and some of whom only occasionally engage a lawyer for advice.

6.4.5 Platform journalism success at the ABC

Each interviewee viewed their teams as very successful. Barry said of *Media Bites*. Barry said:

> It's been good for us because it's brought in a younger audience, puts our name out there in a different way. I think it's been a success. What's good for us is that it's actually changed the way we think about the program [*Media Watch*] a little bit. I think it's made us a bit less distant, you know, less pompous. We're still distant and pompous, but not quite as bad (P. Barry, interview with author, August 12, 2024).

External factors also suggest *Media Bites* is a success for the ABC News (Australia) YouTube channel. *Media Bites* videos regularly received tens of thousands of views. Which is well above the number of views accrued by most videos on the channel.

For Bevan and the ABC, the YouTube version of *If You're Listening* is a major success. Bevan said the YouTube program is performing so well that it is "helping other shows" on the ABC News In-depth YouTube channel (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 7, 2024). The show is consistently outperforming other content on the channel and more than meeting its viewership goal. Bevan said that the initial goal for *If You're Listening* on YouTube was 100,000 views per

video. This target was easily reached. Several videos have well over a million views and the average video view count for 2024 was 337,000. The growth continued into 2025 with the average view for *If You're Listening* videos at 569,000 as of May.

While *If You're Listening* is successful enough to have its own dedicated channel, Bevan stresses the importance of it being on the ABC News In-depth channel. Bevan said:

> At a big organisation like the ABC, it's important that you use the brands that are doing well to lift up other brands. We provide an advantage to the ABC News In-depth channel, where we drive audience to the channel, and that's important (M. Bevan, interview with author, July 31, 2024).

The vertical video team is highly successful in terms of its audience size. The ABC News Australia TikTok account, as of 21 May 2025, has over 942 thousand followers, more than 64.5 million likes, and it regularly receives tens of thousands of views on videos. This is supplemented by the large viewership of the vertical team's Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. McKinnon said the team met the initial goals they set for themselves "pretty quickly":

> It was clear that through the numbers at least, this was a really worthwhile thing that we were doing. In most cases, we were getting better numbers on one video than entire broadcast shows were getting in a week. I think the ABC is doing the best in Australia for vertical video. We're ahead of the curve for Australia (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

Wehbe said, "The numbers we're getting are really good. A successful video for us is getting over 100k views, which is so exciting. Some of them end up around the 50, 60k mark, but 100k is one that hit the mark" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). Like McKinnon, Wehbe compared their performance favourably with successful TV ratings: "If a TV program got 200,000 viewers in a night, that's a smashing success. That's also a smashing success for us, but then we've also got videos getting over 8 million views. So yeah, it is a different level" (A. Wehbe, interview with author, August 15, 2024). These numbers are on TikTok alone.

The ABC journalists interviewed in this study emphasised the success of their online videos, noting that their audience is on par with, or bigger than comparable television programs. This success can be measured by views. The three teams regularly produce videos that receive many thousands, sometimes millions, of views. The view numbers the teams receive are well above other ABC content that is republished to YouTube from television with minimal changes. This success has drawn the attention of people from other areas of the ABC. Lessons learned have been shared. For example, people from television teams are taking notice of the different way the vertical video team produce videos. As McKinnon said:

> We started getting them [people from ABC TV] coming to us, asking, how we're making our videos. I now realise that we weren't just making good vertical videos. We're just making good videos. You can tell exactly when someone drops off with a online video to the second, and what made them stop watching. And we can see an average watch time of a really good video versus a really bad video. So, it was great to see those traditional broadcast shows come to us asking about our principles of making good video, and how they could use that for TV (G. McKinnon, interview with author, October 28, 2024).

Creator practices are spreading it seems, as the ABC journalists finding success by adopting such practices are now influencing their more traditional colleagues.

View count is seen as the primary metric of success for these ABC teams. This is largely in line with how television uses ratings to judge the success of a program. However, it is worth noting that success in terms of views or ratings is not without nuance. Not all views are created equally. Not all videos are easily comparable. For example, while Wehbe compared the 8 million vertical video views to 200,000 views for a television program, comparing an in-depth investigation program, such as Four Corners, with a vertical video on YouTube or TikTok is not a like-for-like comparison. As can be seen with McKinnon's comparison of her work with a colleague's television news package, a better comparison is that between vertical video views and views of television news packages. However, ratings of individual news packages are not readily available, so this comparison remains unclear. What is clear is that there is a tangible difference in monetary value between views on YouTube videos, and views on YouTube Shorts as far more Shorts views are needed than video views in order to become eligible to receive ad revenue on the platform (YouTube, n.d.-b). This is less of a concern for a journalist employed full-time by the ABC, such as the interviewees included in this chapter, than for the independent serious youtubers who were the subject of Chapters 4 and 5.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, four journalists from the ABC were interviewed to understand their opinions, experiences and approaches to making platform journalism videos. The four interviewees came from three different, autonomous, teams within the ABC, and they were selected because they all

produce news content for publication on YouTube. In the case of the vertical video team, they also produce news content for TikTok and Instagram Reels. I have shown that their videos are examples of platform journalism.

The three teams have a great deal in common despite having no direct connection or collaboration. *Media Bites*, *If You're Listening* and the vertical video team all began at the request of ABC management. The teams were then left to their own initiatives, and they experimented with digital video. By explicitly copying the norms and practices of independent content creators, they produced platform journalism. However, the interviewees in this chapter also said that traditional newsroom practices, such as editorial meetings, remain a key part of the production process. And, unlike independent serious youtubers, they have organisational support such as access to in-house legal teams. At the ABC, then, we are seeing something of a convergence of platform journalism and traditional journalism. And the audience viewership numbers show that this variety of journalism is hugely successful.

The platform journalism videos produced by the interviewees and their teams are successful in terms of audience size. The videos they produce regularly match or exceed the viewership numbers of more traditional formats. They also outperform other content the ABC simply republished on platforms from television. Clearly, platform journalism is not a hypothetical future option for large news organisations such as the ABC. Rather it is a current, very successful, reality.

There are several areas of commonality in the digital video experiences of the interviewees. This is despite the interviewees coming from different unrelated teams within the ABC. These areas

of commonality provide important insights into how the ABC is adapting to the rising popularity of online video for news. Commonalities found in this chapter are: that their digital video work is exploratory; they consciously adopt norms of specific platforms while retaining certain key newsroom journalism practices; and the videos of each team are high performing, equal to or exceeding the performance of other news output from the broadcaster.

Bad habits are hard to break. The typical response to social media by news organisations has often been to "select and adapt existing stories from their own websites" for republishing on social media (Hase et al., 2023, p. 1500). Based on my observations, the ABC also applies this practice for much of its video content on social media. This repurposing of television content and adherence to traditional journalism production approaches largely continue despite research as early as 2011 showing that success on YouTube was often achieved by deviating from traditional news practices and standards (Peer & Ksiazek, 2011, p. 56). It is a testament to the conservative nature of major news organisations that many continue, in 2026, to simply republish clips from television programs rather than create or adapt content to make it fit for purpose on digital platforms. By contrast, Barry, Bevan, McKinnon and Wehbe don't just try to "win the prize" of audience engagement. Rather, they approach their work with an attitude in line with serious youtubers. They create their videos using platform norms and common practices to give audiences "authentic" platform-appropriate news content.

Large audiences can be reached by producing video journalism for publication on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. However, the journalism needs to be produced in a way that audiences using those platforms expect and demand. It needs to be more than an attempt to gain traffic to a news website. Journalism needs to be tailored to the specific platform on which it is published. As interviewees said, this includes "hooking" audience attention with "OMG" and "WTF"

moments in the first few seconds, and making sure the videos are appropriate for the platform in terms of mode of address, aesthetics, and editing. It also includes having more timely content for vertical video, while more in-depth analysis performs well on YouTube proper, rather than YouTube Shorts.

Platform specific elements that were mentioned by the interviewees are well within the reach of any journalist. There is little needed in terms of expensive equipment or studio time. In fact, the interviews showed that television studios should be avoided in favour of casual set designs or locations. The mode of address should be casual, using the natural accent and mannerisms of the journalist rather than a formal "television news" register. Set designs can be a simple room or office with coloured lighting and assorted paraphernalia. While such elements make the journalism production process more accessible, "certain traditional" production elements remain crucial. The aesthetic and presentation norms and common practices of serious youtubers, are becoming well-established. The most significant of these is good audio. A good microphone is essential as bad audio, such as that recorded with a basic smartphone microphone, is likely to turn off viewers.

The institutional knowledge and support that the interviewees benefit from are absent, or nascent, for independent youtubers who are increasingly producing platform journalism. While startup costs can be low, they are not nothing. By contract, journalists that are part of a news organisation do not shoulder costs for recording equipment, editing software and more. Also, news organisations have significant human resources that can be drawn upon when needed, the most significant being access to in-house legal experts. While the teams included in this chapter have more organisational support than independent youtubers, this support has limits. This is especially evident when it comes to comment moderation where few resources are allocated.

Bevan's experiences are particularly illuminating. Typically, news organisations take clips from television and republish them on digital video platforms. However, Bevan's experience points to an unexpected source of digital video producers within news organisations – radio. Bevan said that introducing the camera to his work has created few substantial changes in his production workflow. Indeed, he said the youtuber norm of jump cuts is the same editing process as in audio production. While the aesthetics and related practices of television journalism may be too entrenched and unwieldy for easy adaption to video-based platform journalism, radio broadcasters and podcasters may have an easier time adapting to producing platform journalism on YouTube.

The data from the journalist interviews in this chapter present insights into a positive way forward for journalism in general, and for digital video in particular. By producing videos that fit the platforms they are on, and specifically YouTube, journalists at the ABC have managed to create digital video news content that often outperforms more traditional news media formats. To be successful on video-based online platforms, specific knowledge of platforms is needed. Choosing between journalism and content for digital platforms is a false choice. Digital platforms are themselves a place to publish journalism that services the audiences that exist there. The interviewees and their work show that with digital platforms and journalism, it is not a matter of one or the other.

Chapter 7 – Youtubers in the eyes of the law

7.1 Introduction: Where youtubers meet the law

In Chapters 4 and 5, serious youtubers were shown to produce public interest journalism – the type of journalism the law appears to want to protect. In Chapter 6, we saw that mainstream journalists are deliberately adopting the practices of youtubers. As shown in Chapter 3, there is a great variety of ways journalism and related terms are understood in law. Many legal definitions of journalism-related terms seem unlikely to cover youtubers – particularly person-based definitions. As serious youtubers continue to report on newsworthy public interest issues, including investigative reporting that relies on confidential whistleblowers, they are increasingly likely to be exposed to the law. In this chapter, having established that youtubers are producing industry-influencing platform journalism, I return to the law to investigate the extent to which serious youtubers have access to legal privileges, exemptions and defences for journalists.

The question at the heart of this chapter is: does Australian law treat youtubers who produce journalism as journalists? To answer this question, I revisit three youtubers from Chapter 4 to determine their journalism status in three key areas of law. First, friendlyjordies is analysed in relation to shield laws. Second, Money & Marco is analysed in relation to defamation law. And third, Punter's Politics is analysed in relation to the News Media Bargaining Code (NMBC), which is currently being adapted into the News Bargaining Incentive, as well as the Australian government's Journalism Assistance Fund program. Both friendlyjordies and Money & Macro were found to produce public interest journalism in Chapter 5. Punter's Politics was not included in Chapter 5 but is included here because it is an Australian channel, which makes it more suitable for analysis concerning Australian law.

The areas of law discussed in this chapter are just three of many that deal with journalism privileges, exemptions and special defences. However, these areas of law exemplify current and serious legal issues arising from independent media creators increasingly creating news and journalism. Such creators are more likely to run into legal pitfalls compared to journalists such as the ABC interviewees from Chapter 6 who enjoy the benefits of institutional knowledge and legal resources that come from being part of a major news organisation. Currently, however, there is considerable uncertainty and confusion about the status of youtubers. This chapter seeks to provide some clarity and indicate a way forward in this area.

7.2 The Baddest MP: Dutton and Shield Laws

- *The Baddest MP: Dutton* (2022) - https://youtu.be/aIGKCkS01EA

The Baddest MP: Dutton is an investigation by the Australian YouTube channel friendlyjordies of alleged corruption and illicit drug use, which was found to be investigative public interest journalism in Chapter 5 (see 5.4.1). The investigation was built on leaked material from a confidential informant. However, as this chapter shows, the presence of investigative public interest journalism does not automatically mean a court would find that the person conducting the investigation, friendlyjordies writer/presenter Shanks-Markovina, is a journalist under shield laws and would thus qualify for the journalist privilege of source identity protection.

As discussed in Chapter 3, journalism understandings in shield laws are a mess. The primary statutes for this area of law are the nine Evidence Acts which have among them five definitions for journalist. In addition to the Evidence Acts, the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) (BSA), the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Cth), the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) all have shield law provisions. While the BSA has a unique definition of

journalist, the *Crime and Corruption Act* uses the same definition as the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld). The *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act* and the *Privacy Act* do not have definitions for journalist for their shield law provisions. In this one area of law there are six contrasting definitions for journalist, two undefined journalism understandings, as well as the complete absence of a journalism understanding in the *Evidence Act 2001* (Tas). This inconsistency means that it is difficult to know whether youtubers qualify for journalists' privilege, and it may be that youtubers can receive journalist protections in one jurisdiction but not another. Adding complexity to the situation is the lack of in-house legal teams for serious youtubers and the fact that serious youtubers are reluctant to self-identify as journalists.

In Chapter 5, *The Baddest MP: Dutton* video was assessed to be investigative public interest journalism. The video includes financial documents, emails, photographs, and allegations that all come from a confidential informant. The question raised by these inclusions is as follows: is *The Baddest MP: Dutton* covered by shield laws, or some other journalist privilege, which would protect friendlyjordies from having to reveal its sources? To start, friendlyjordies is based in New South Wales (Australian Business Register. (n.d.)). However, the majority of the story in the video concerns people, businesses and activities in Queensland. Moreover, it also concerns a federal government department and a federal politician. As such, this video and friendlyjordies will be assessed using the New South Wales, Queensland, and Commonwealth Evidence Acts.

7.2.1 NSW: Person-based definition

The NSW Act defines journalist as "a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a news medium" (*Evidence Act 1995* (NSW), s 126J). Problematically the NSW Act does not say what journalism is or what a

journalism professional does, other than the vague reference to work done "in connection with" publishing information. As noted in Chapter 3, there is no case law that helps explain the meaning of this term.

Indeed, the definition of journalist in the NSW Act has not been tested in court, and it is unclear whether youtubers would fit this definition. For many youtubers, there is a distinct lack of clarity about the nature of their occupation, as explored in Chapter 4 (see 4.4.4). Shanks-Markovina has often made statements rejecting the label journalist, however, on rare occasions, he does refer to himself as a journalist, for example referring to his investigations into organised crime he said, "I guess in this context I'll have to call myself a journalist" (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2025). Based solely on Shanks-Markovina's self-description, friendlyjordies may or may not be judged to be in the profession or occupation of journalism.

Another way that membership of a profession or occupation of journalism is assessed is whether a code of conduct or, code of ethics or code of practice, is formally adopted. However, the NSW Act does not prescribe the requirement of adherence to a code of ethics for its shield law. While adherence to an industry accepted code of ethics, such as that of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), could provide prima facie evidence for professionalism, even if it is not stipulated in the NSW Act, this has not been tested in NSW courts. In any case, friendlyjordies does not have a formalised code of ethics, nor are any of the team subscribed to any recognised industry journalist code of practice (K. Langker, interview with author, August 25, 2023). By this measure, friendlyjordies is not a member of a profession or occupation.

As detailed in Chapter 4, youtubers are subject to official complaints processes via the YouTube platform (see 4.4.2). Official complaints against YouTube channels can be made in a number of areas including defamation, copyright, privacy, trademarks and inappropriate content (Google Support, n.d.-c, n.d.-d, n.d.-e, n.d.-h, n.d.-i). In this way YouTube provides a de facto regulatory regime and complaints-handling system for youtubers. However, it is unlikely that a court would consider YouTube terms and conditions to be acceptable professional media standards. In key areas such as factual accuracy, YouTube's relevant policy on misinformation is likely to be found to be far too narrowly focused, being limited to the three areas: suppression of census information; misleadingly manipulated content; and misattributed content (Google Support, n.d.-g).

For the reasons given above, it is unlikely that friendlyjordies would receive the protection of the NSW shield law. This is not surprising given that the NSW law's definition is person-based with a strong focus on "the profession or occupation of journalism". In a NSW court, Shanks-Markovina and other friendlyjordies team members could be forced to reveal their sources.

7.2.2 Queensland and Commonwealth: Activity-based definitions

By contrast, the Queensland Act has a different focus that appears to encompass youtubers. Unlike the NSW Act, the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) has no professional or occupational requirement. Rather, it has a focus on issues of public interest, a focus that is only found in the Queensland and Northern Territory Evidence Acts. *The Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) (s 14R(2)) defines journalist as a person "engaged and active in gathering and assessing information about matters of public interest; and preparing the information or providing comment or opinion on or analysis of the information, for publication in a news medium". In Chapter 5, friendlyjordies was

assessed to produce public interest journalism. The friendlyjordies channel regularly produces videos on matters of public interest, as shown in Chapter 5 (see 5.3). So, Shanks-Markovina and the friendlyjordies team could be said to be engaged and active in "gathering and assessing" this information and preparing it for publication. They could also be said to be providing comment and opinion on this information for publication, and they publish such information and commentary for public consumption on their channel which could be argued to be a news medium, as explained below. This Queensland definition has not been tested in court.

Friendlyjordies appears to also meet the Commonwealth Act's definition. The definition in the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) requires there to be an informant for someone to be considered a journalist. The Act's definition of journalist is "a person who is engaged and active in the publication of news and who may be given information by an informant in the expectation that the information may be published in a news medium" (*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) s 126J). On the face of it, friendlyjordies meets this definition. As noted in relation to the Queensland legislation above, Shanks-Markovina is "engaged and active", and at least some of the friendlyjordies content, including this video, can be regarded as "news" because, as shown in Chapter 5, the video in question can be regarded as public interest journalism. Importantly, the video also contains information that was received by an informant who contacted friendlyjordies so that their information could be published. All of the aspects point towards a successful application of the Commonwealth shield law in respect to this video. However, for the Commonwealth *Evidence Act* – unlike the New South Wales and Queensland Evidence Acts – there is case law that provides a deeper insight into what is required to meet this definition.

7.2.3 Kumova v Davison: A court interpretation of journalist

The most comprehensive consideration of an Evidence Act's definition of journalist was for the Commonwealth Act in *Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, which was discussed in Chapter 3 (see 3.5.2). This case involved the consideration of whether the defendant, Mr Davison, was a journalist under the Act and therefore able to claim journalist privilege for Twitter posts that were the subject of the defamation complaint (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 1). To help with his interpretation of journalist, Flick J drew on the *Victorian Evidence Act*. The case occurred before the current Queensland journalist definition was introduced and, at the time, the Victorian Act had the most detailed list of factors in shield laws for consideration when determining whether someone is a journalist.

In the Victorian Act, these factors must be considered by a court, however, Flick J makes clear that consideration of the factors is optional in regard to applications of the Commonwealth Act (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 12). As part of his consideration of these factors, Flick J stated that being "engaged and active" in the Act's definition rules out one-off or occasional news publication (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13). Another important element raised in the judgment was fairness (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 12). As noted above, friendlyjordies would appear to meet the criterion on being "active and engaged", while fairness is evidenced in the rights of reply given to investigation subjects in *The Baddest MP: Dutton* (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2022b). Perhaps most importantly for this analysis, however, Flick J found that there is no requirement for a news producers to be a professional or employed as a journalist.

Kumova v Davison: Self-identification and motivation

The motive or purpose of the media producer was also a key factor for Flick J in determining who meets the definition of journalist (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 12). This is where the serious identity crisis of serious youtubers, as explored in Chapter 4, can cause problems. In his judgment, Flick J said that the central factor in determining if the person in question was a journalist was their self-described purpose (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13). His Honour looked to the self-description in the "profile header" of the Twitter account of focus for his assessment of purpose and motivations (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 13). For friendlyjordies, an equivalent starting point would be the description section of the YouTube channel. The description of friendlyjordies is unlikely to be considered in line with journalistic motivations as it says, "IT'S THE BIGGEST VARIETY SHOW IN TOOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWNNNNNNNN!!!!" (Figure 23).

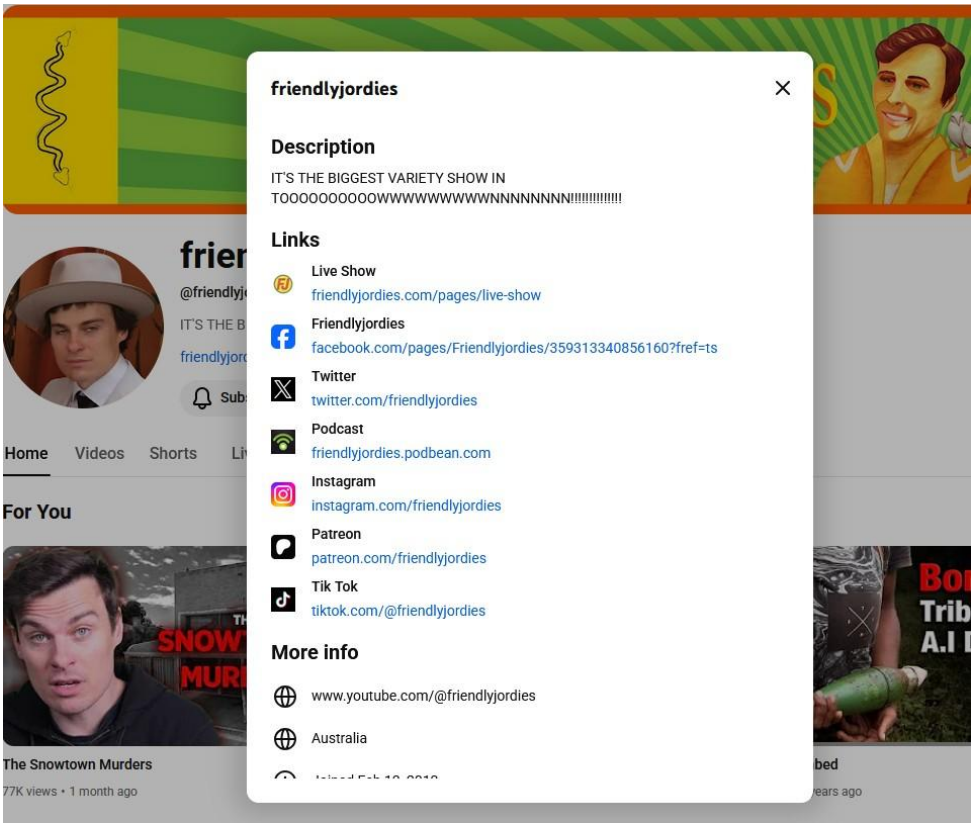

Figure 23. Self-description of friendlyjordies in the channel's Description section (friendlyjordies, n.d.-b).

On a YouTube channel, there are other ways to determine the self-described purpose or motive of a channel's creator. One of these is a channel's video trailer. For some youtubers, they make it easy to identify their channel trailer. For example, Money & Macro's channel trailer is called *Money & Macro Channel Trailer* (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2022). Ryan McBeth's is called *Who is Ryan McBeth?* (McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2024a) The channel trailer for friendlyjordies is called *BOYCOTT THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA!* (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2017).

This friendlyjordies video is over nine years old, however, it remains the trailer video in the About section of the channel's Patreon account (friendlyjordies, n.d.-a). The main point of this video is to convert viewers to financial supporters by asking them to become Patreon members. The video criticises established news organisations and makes claims that they are failing in the

journalism function of informing the public. The video contains numerous jokes and skits, and the presenter Shanks-Markovina says, "I'm never going to do anything on there [the channel] that pretends to be informative" (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2017). Later in the video Shanks-Markovina lists the positive outcomes resulting from the informative videos on the channel. These claimed outcomes include influencing thousands of Australians to switch to green energy, get a compost bin, join a union, sign up to protect the Great Barrier Reef and not vote for the Liberal Party (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2017). Taken as a whole, the trailer video clearly shows that Shanks-Markovina considers himself influential. In a court, such material could be used as evidence to show that Shanks-Markovina's motivations behind the channel are not journalistic in nature and hence that he is not a journalist under the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth).

Kumova v Davison: Serious youtubers and news mediums

"News medium" is a term included in the definition of journalist for each of the three Evidence Acts of focus here. Each Act defines news medium in a way that is substantively identical, but with minor grammatical differences. While news medium has not been interpreted for the NSW and Queensland Act, its meaning in the Commonwealth Act was considered in *Kumova v Davison*. His Honour assessed whether the Twitter account in question, rather than the platform itself, was a news medium. As per Flick J's analysis, it seems reasonable to conclude that any assessment of news medium in the context of YouTube would focus on an individual channel rather than YouTube as a whole. If a YouTube channel is determined not to be a new medium, then the definition of journalist would not be met.

In the Commonwealth Act, "news medium means any medium for the dissemination to the public or a section of the public of news and observations on news" (*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth), s 126J). Factors considered in *Kumova v Davison* were:

- whether the content creator had already been ruled out as a journalist (p. 16),
- the self-description on the Twitter account's "Header Profile" (p. 16), and
- content on the Twitter account broadly (p. 16).

Regularity was important too, with Flick J holding that the account needs to be regularly used to publish news for it to be considered a news medium. His Honour said that a news medium:

> must remain a medium which is routinely or regularly used by journalists as a medium primarily, or at least substantially, for the publication of "news" as opposed to a medium which may from time to time be the source of "news" (p. 16).

Given this reasoning, it is possible that the friendlyjordies channel could be considered a news medium for the purposes of all three Acts. However, the channel's self-description (Figure 23) weakens the argument that friendlyjordies is a news medium even though the channel carries a great deal of news content. In Chapter 5, 65% of the 375 analysed friendlyjordies videos were found to be predominantly about newsworthy information on public interest topics (Figure 10). Courts would have to decide whether 65% comprises "primarily, or at least substantially" and they would need to weigh the channel's newsworthy content against the channel's self-description. The newsworthy content may prove to be a more significant factor compared to the self-description which could be claimed to be simply a marketing strategy or a joke that the large bulk of the channel's audience is "in on". Without judicial interpretation, it is unclear whether the friendlyjordies channel would be considered a news medium.

7.2.4 Conclusion on source protection and friendlyjordies

The video *The Baddest MP: Dutton* is covered by the Evidence Acts of at least three jurisdictions, each of which have their own different definition of journalist. These definitions are inconsistent. The NSW Act's definition includes requirements for a person to be professional or employed in journalism; the other two Acts do not. The Queensland Act explicitly includes matters of public interest while the other Acts do not. And the Commonwealth Act was explicitly drafted to include people who are not employed with the job title journalist (Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates,* House of Representatives, 21 March 2011, 2393-2394 (Andrew Wilkie)). The Commonwealth Act is the only one that has been interpreted by the courts, and to further complicate matters that interpretation drew on elements from the *Victorian Evidence Act*, which itself has another distinct definition.

The NSW Act's emphasis on profession and occupation and Shanks-Markovina's inconsistent professional self-description make meeting that Act's definition of journalist unlikely. By contrast, Shanks-Markovina could possibly satisfy the Queensland Evidence Act's definition of journalist. This definition places emphasis on the public interest nature of the content and the activities that went into the making of the content.

The decision in *Kumova v Davison* at least opens the door for serious youtubers to meet the definition of journalist under the Commonwealth legislation. It should be noted, however, that this analysis is based on only one decided matter. On this analysis, then, friendlyjordies might well satisfy both the Queensland and Commonwealth Evidence Acts. This stands to reason. Both the Queensland and Commonwealth Acts contain activity-based definitions, which means the focus is on the activity rather than on the person, a youtuber is more likely to qualify.

However, meeting the Commonwealth's definition remains unclear as it depends on whether significant weight is put on his inconsistent professional self-description, the channel description, and channel trailer. Unfortunately, there are few court cases on point, but *Kumova v Davison* provides some guidance. One important difference of facts between the Twitter account in *Kumova v Davison* and the friendlyjordies channel is that friendlyjordies has a long history of publishing videos on newsworthy and public interest topics, which is evidence of being "engaged and active". On the other hand, a decision in relation to *The Baddest MP: Dutton* and friendlyjordies may be influenced by the judgment in *Barilaro v Google LLC* FCA 650 (p. 115) where Rares J characterised friendlyjordies content as "poison".

This analysis of friendlyjordies in relation to shield laws allows us to understand the likelihood of Shanks-Markovina qualifying for shield law provisions in other jurisdictions and other Acts (Table 4). This is possible as certain definitions are shared among several jurisdictions. For example, the journalist definition in the NSW *Evidence Act* is also used in the Evidence Acts of Western Australia and South Australia. In other cases, Acts have different definitions but share key elements, such as the Queensland and Northern Territory Evidence Acts. Both are activity-based understandings, and both include democratic functions of journalism.

Table 4: Likelihood of Shanks-Markovina qualifying for journalist privilege protection for Baddest MP:Dutton.

Likely	**Unlikely**	**Unclear**
- *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) - *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) - *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) - *Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* (NT)	- *Evidence Act 1995* (NSW) - *Evidence Act 2025* (WA) - *Evidence Act 1929* (SA) - *Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) - *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) - *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Cth)	- *Evidence Act 1995 (Cth)* - *Evidence Act 2011* (ACT)

7.3 Money & Macro and defamation

- *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics* (2025) - https://youtu.be/BRcWIXMQze8

The YouTube channel Money & Macro, presented by Dr. Joeri Schasfoort, is an economics-focused channel that was found to produce public interest journalism in Chapter 5 (see 5.4.2). In this section, one Money & Macro video will be used to investigate how the public interest defamation defence might apply to a youtuber. In the Money & Macro video *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics,* Schasfoort questions the trustworthiness, and fact-checks the work of, Gary Stevenson (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2026). Stevenson is also an economist and former interest rate trader (Garyseconomics, n.d.). Stevenson has a much larger online presence compared to Money & Macro with over 1.54 million subscribers on YouTube, almost half a million followers on TikTok, and over 1,800 paid members on Patreon.[4]

To assess whether the public interest defamation defence applies to Money & Macro, I will consider what might ensue if Stevenson were to sue Money & Macro in NSW for defamatory imputations in the video *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics*. Stevenson's professional reputation is built on being a trusted authority on economics. He says in his YouTube channel's About section that "Other Economists make predictions, but my ones are actually right" (Garys Economics, n.d.).

Several claims in the video that are potentially damaging to a reputation based on being "right". Indeed, Schasfoort explicitly states four times that key economics claims by Stevenson are wrong (see time stamps 5:51, 10:25, 12:49, and 18:44). Schasfoort says that, regarding trustworthiness,

[4] As of 3 March 2026.

Stevenson is "a mixed bag" (18:11) adding that "Gary hardly ever backs up any of his claims with evidence in his own videos" (5:53), and that he "needs to be a little less hyperbolic with his messaging and be a bit more evidence based" (19:02). Schasfoort also says, "Gary has built a massive following precisely with very hyperbolic [economic] collapse messages" (19:09). For the following analysis, it is assumed that Stevenson regards these comments as defamatory and sues in NSW.

7.3.1 Defamation law overview

This section focuses on the *Defamation Act* because journalists are often sued for defamation. Unlike some of the other Acts analysed in Chapter 3, defamation law is frequently litigated. Indeed, Australia has been described as the defamation capital of the world (Allman, 2020). What's more, this section focuses on the public interest defence because it most closely aligns with public interest journalism. As Rolph explains, the public interest defence was developed as part of a first wave of recent round of law reform that concluded in 2021 (Rolph et al., 2022, p. check page in book-section 8.6). The new defence arose out of the consistent failure of another defence, that of qualified privilege, to provide adequate protection for journalism. As explained in Chapter 3, for a defence of public interest to be successful, the defendant needs to prove that the matter concerns "(a) an issue of public interest, and (b) the defendant reasonably believed that the publication of the matter was in the public interest" (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) s 29A(1)(a-b)).

The Money & Macro video in question is about important economic issues and whether economics and policy are being discussed accurately by Stevenson, who has a large and influential public profile. Prima facie, this is a story in the public interest. Also, the explicitly

stated objective of the Money & Macro channel is to keep the audience "properly informed about the global economy" (Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2022). The stated goal of the channel is thus squarely aligned with public interest journalism principles. However, there are further factors that a court may consider when determining whether the public interest defence holds, including: the seriousness of defamatory imputations; distinctions between suspicion and proven facts; and the quality of sources (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) s 29A(3)(a-i)). These factors are laid out in s 29A and are set out in full in Chapter 3 (see 3.5.6).

Defamation law concerns the publication of imputations that harm the reputation of an identifiable individual. Its purpose has been neatly summarised by the New South Wales Supreme Court: "The fundamental purpose of civil defamation proceedings is to vindicate and to protect the reputation of the person defamed" (*Spautz v Williams* [1983] 2 NSWLR 506, 540). In 2021, reforms came into effect that provide the public interest defence *(Defamation Act 2005* (NSW), s29A*)*. For journalists, this defence has superseded the defence of qualified privilege, which was rarely successful for journalist defendants. Qualified privileges has been retained, in an amended form in s 30. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Australian Defamation Acts do not contain journalism-related terms. However, while not explicit, the aims of the public interest defence are implicitly aimed at protecting public interest journalism (see 3.5.6). Other defences are available in defamation law. These include defences of justification (truth) and contextual truth, the defences of honest opinion, and the defences of fair report of proceedings of public concern such as public parliamentary proceedings and public court proceedings (*Defamation Act 2005* (NSW) ss 26, 29(4)(a, e), 31).

As was detailed in Chapter 3, there is now case law that indicates how these factors in the public interest defence are applied (see 3.5.6). In *Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, the public

interest defence was unsuccessful for reasons that included the failure to "distinguish between suspicions, allegations and proven facts" (*Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporatio*n (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223, p. 101). It was also found that not enough was done by ABC journalists to verify information from sources as well as the integrity of their sources, and not enough was done to "accurately convey (or attempt to ascertain) Russell's side of the story" (p. 94).

7.3.2 Applying s 29A to Money & Macro

When we apply s 29A to *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics,* the most relevant factors for determining whether the public interest defence succeeds are arguably: the seriousness of imputations; allegations and proven facts; whether the matter relates to public functions; the sources of the information; and the right of reply. These can be addressed one-by-one.

- the seriousness of any defamatory imputation carried by the matter published (s 29A(3)(a)).

The defamatory imputations in *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics* are potentially serious. Gary Stevenson has a high profile and there is a possibility that the video could cause significant harm to his professional reputation. Such harm could impact his YouTube-based business if audience members subsequently turn away from his channel. Any change in Australian, though not NSW, viewership is able to be assessed as YouTube channel analytics provides audience data on a country-by-country basis. Harm to professional reputation caused by defamatory matter is something that can be considered serious in defamation cases. This was evident in *Al Muderis v Nine Network Australia Pty Limited* FCA [2025] 909.

- the extent to which the matter published distinguishes between suspicions, allegations and proven facts (s 29A(3)(b)).

In the video Schasfoort makes a clear effort to ensure that his claims are based on verifiable facts. Fact claims and opinions are clearly differentiated and signposted. Sources are explicitly cited. These include academic literature (3:11 & 9:53), and government census data (12:16). The opinion that Stevenson is only partly trustworthy based on the presented verifiable facts is made at the 18:17 mark. In this video, a clear distinction is made between allegations and proven facts. The importance of using clear signposting language to distinguish between suspicions, allegations, and proven facts was stressed in *Al Muderis v Nine* (FCA [2025], 909, p. 632).

- the extent to which the matter published relates to the performance of the public functions or activities of the person (s 29A(3)(c)).

The video is clearly aimed at discussing the public activities and performance of Stevenson, not his personal life. Stevenson is not a holder of public office, nor does he have a senior position in a major corporation. However, this section is not restricted to such people. What is important is that the activities concern members of the public. This was made clear in *Al Muderis v Nine Network Australia Pty Limited* [2025] FCA 909 (p. 632). Stevenson has a large online following and makes regular appearances in traditional media, including the ABC, where he gives advice and recommendations on economics and public policy (Taylor, 2026). He also regularly sends his own statements into the public domain, particularly via his YouTube channel.

- the sources of the information in the matter published, including the integrity of the sources (s 29A(3)(e)).

The sources of the information presented in the video are of a high level of integrity. They predominantly comprise peer-reviewed academic literature and official government data. For example, an academic article from a Q1 economics journal is used to give information about tax havens (3:25) and data from the World Inequality Database is used to compare countries in terms of wealth inequality (4:51). Another example is the use of government census data to explain housing vacancies across the UK (12:23).

- whether the matter published contained the substance of the person's side of the story and, if not, whether a reasonable attempt was made by the defendant to obtain and publish a response from the person (s 29A(3)(g)).

The video includes some effort to show Stevenson's side of the story by showing clips of him expressing his opinions (1:31). Schasfoort also says in the video that he had reached out to Stevenson's team multiple times to obtain a response, but that by the time of recording no response had been received (20:29).

Taking into account all these factors as prescribed by s 29A, we can conclude that, if Schasfoort were sued for defamation by Stevenson in NSW, he could arguably succeed in invoking the public interest defence. The matter and its publication are seemingly in the public interest. The video is presented using verifiable facts from quality sources. There is a clear distinction between allegations and facts. And while courts will always look at the fact of the matter to decide whether a request for comment was reasonable in the circumstances, fairness appears to have been demonstrated with the attempts to offer

Stevenson a right of reply. Crucially, s 29A offers a public interest defence, not a journalism defence. This point was in the Federal Court in 2024 by O'Callaghan J, who found that the factors discussed above are not restricted to considerations involving journalists (*Deeming v Pesutto (No 3)* [2024] FCA 1430, p. 156).

In addition to the above considerations, the public interest defence requires that the defendant must have subjective belief that a publication is in the public interest and that this belief was reasonable (*Defamation Act 2005* s 29A(1)(b). A court would inquire into both the belief and the reasonableness of such belief. For this Money & Macro video, we do not have enough evidence to fully address this here. However, on the face of it, it certainly seems that the belief was there and genuine and all the factors above, such as the sources used, could be used to establish that this belief was reasonable in the circumstances.

Whether or not Money & Macro could rely on it in the scenario described above, s 29A clearly has the scope to cover youtubers without becoming tangled in definitional issues around who a journalist is, or what journalism is.

7.4 Punter's Politics and government support for "core news"

Punter's Politics is an Australian YouTube channel that publishes videos that report on, comment on, and explain Australian politics and economic issues. Konrad Michalski, the face of the channel, was the last youtuber to be interviewed for this thesis as his sudden and sharp rise in popularity occurred towards the end of the youtuber interview phase of the research. The late

inclusion of Michalski as an interviewee created an opportunity to analyse a second popular Australian youtuber in relation to Australian law.

For this section, Punter's Politics was subjected to the same content analysis method that was applied to friendlyjordies, Money & Macro and Ryan McBeth in Chapter 5 (Appendix K). For this content analysis, all 59 videos on the channel from 25 March 2025 to 14 April 2026 were included. First, they were assessed as to whether the primary focus of the video was a newsworthy public interest topic. Then, the specific topics of the videos were identified. Of the 59 videos, 54 were about public interest topics. Of these, 38 were about politics, 11 about economic issues, and five were about societal issues.

The content analysis process, combined with observations made on the channel as part of the interviewee selection process (see 4.3.3), has provided enough data to assess the channel as at least meeting the "low bar" definition of journalism as defined in this thesis, which I have defined as the editorially independent activity of collecting, interpreting and regularly publishing newsworthy content. The clear majority of videos from Punter's Politics meet this definition. No attempt was made to do a close reading of videos on the channel, and no assessment was made as to whether any video on the channel was public interest journalism. Prima facie, however, my observations and analysis show that several Punter's Politics videos are likely to meet my definition of public interest journalism.

While Punter's Politics meets my definition of journalism, and is likely at least sometimes to meet my definition of public interest journalism, that does not mean it meets legal or regulatory definitions. What follows is an analysis of whether Punter's Politics produces core news as

defined in the News Media Bargaining Code (NMBC) and the News Media Relief Program. Included in the analysis will be a consideration of whether or not Punter's Politics would be eligible to register as a "news media business" under the NMBC and whether it is eligible to receive funds under the Federal Government's Journalism Assistance Fund Program.

7.4.1 News Media Bargaining Code and News Bargaining Incentive

The above discussions of shield laws and defamation law each required consideration of a specific video. When we turn to the NMBC, the focus needs to be on the YouTube channel as a whole and whether its "primary purpose" is to "create content that it core news content" (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth), s 52N(1)). The NMBC contains two journalism-related definitions, "covered news" and "core news". For a detailed discussion of the NMBC see 3.5.7. Covered news is "content that is any of the following: (a) core news content; (b) content that reports, investigates or explains current issues or events of interest to Australians" (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52A). The narrower category of core news is defined as:

> content that reports, investigates or explains: (a) issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision-making; or (b) current issues or events of public significance for Australians at a local, regional or national level (s 52A).

Punter's Politics would appear to meet the definition of core news as it reports on and explains current issues and events related to Australian politics and economics. Based on my analysis of the channel's output, Punter's Politics videos engage Australians in public debate, and they provide information relevant to democratic decision-making. For example, Punter's Politics

videos report or comment on housing affordability, mining royalties and government policies (Michalski [Punter's Politics], 2025a, 2025b, 2026a). As core news is a subset of covered news, Punter's Politics also meets the definition of covered news.

If Punter's Politics primarily produces core news content, then it passes the content test, one of the four tests set out for a news business to be able to register under the code (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52N). The other tests are the revenue test, which requires a media business to have more than $150,000 in revenue (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52M(1)), the Australian audience test (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52O(1)), and the professional standards test, which requires adherence to a code of conduct or editorial standards (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52P(1)(a)). It is likely that Punter's Politics would pass the Australian audience test as the channel focuses on explaining political and economic issues relevant for Australians, with Michalski saying that Punter's Politics aims to fill a gap in the Australian market (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024). The revenue test requires little interpretation and comes down to the revenue of Punter's Politics. Its sizable online presence makes meeting this test likely; it is assumed here that, for the sake of argument, Punter's Politics satisfies this test.

The professional standards test is where Punter's Politics may fall short. A way to pass this test would be for Punter's Politics to be subject to official standards of organisations such as the Australian Press Council (APC), or subject to a broadcast code of practice registered under the ACMA (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52P (1)(a)(i-ii)). The media organisation Punter's Politics is based around a YouTube channel, and it is clearly not a "broadcasting service" for the purposes of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth). In addition, while the (APC) has a number of smaller publishers as a part of its membership, it does not currently admit

YouTube channels. However, Michalski could become a member of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, and thus be subject to the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics. Alternatively, Punter's Politics could pass this test if it had "internal editorial standards that are analogous to the rules" that are set out in standards or codes of practice such as those mentioned above (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52P (1)(a)(iv)). As is overwhelmingly the case with serious youtubers, Punter's Politics has no such formalised code of ethics or set of editorial standards (K. Michalski, interview with author, November 28, 2024).

Despite primarily producing content that meets the definition of core news. Punter's Politics would not be eligible to register under the NMBC as it fails the professional standards test prescribed in s 52A. As such, Michalski could not register as a news media business with the ACMA, and would potentially be left out of any benefits, including funds, that flow to registered businesses under the code. The government is currently "reinforcing" the NMBC with the News Bargaining Incentive, which as drafted relies on the same content test, and the same definitions of core and covered news. Punter's Politics would miss out there too. The bottom line is worth repeating: arguably, Punter's Politics primarily produces core news; however, the channel would likely miss out on benefits under the NMBC and NBI due to the professional standards test.

Journalism Assistance Fund Program

In late 2025, the Australian government released guidelines for grants under the Journalism Assistance Fund (JAF) Program, which is aimed at "helping the sustainability of Australian news publishers by providing a proportion of the wages for journalists producing core news content that is distributed digitally" (Australian Government, n.d.). The program aims to do this by

awarding grants of $13,000 per year for three years to media businesses for each eligible fulltime journalist (Business Grant Hub, 2025, p. 6).

The guidelines include definitions for journalist and core news. In the guidelines, a journalist is given the succinct definition of a "person paid to produce core news content" (Business Grant Hub, 2025, p. 21). The definition for core news is substantially the same definition as that contained in the NMBC, with some minor grammatical differences (Business Grant Hub, 2025, p. 19).

The conceptualisation of core news in the Journalism Assistance Fund program appears more restrictive than that of the NMBC. This is seen in the program's guidelines which give further details on how core news must be understood. Specifically, the guidelines make explicit that which cannot be considered core news. Opinion pieces and editorials are excluded from the understanding of core news (Business Grant Hub, 2025, p. 8). This is unlike the NMBC, which allows opinion pieces and editorials in its definition of core news, as long as they play "a significant role in reporting, investigating or explaining issues that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision making" (Explanatory Memorandum, Treasury Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Bill 2021, p. 20). This difference is surprising and could have significant results for serious youtubers.

Punter's Politics publishes videos that are journalism, and are prima facie public interest journalism, as defined in this thesis. While a lot of what appears on the channel is effectively opinion pieces, much of it reports on or explains issues and events that are relevant to

Australians and their democratic decision making. Punter's Politics appears to meet the definitions of core news and journalist in the guidelines. It should be noted that the decision to accept a grant applicant comes down to the assessment by a grant delegate, and there is no opportunity for review once a decision is made (Business Grant Hub, 2025, p. 10). It remains uncertain how a grant application from an organisation like Punter's Politics would be assessed.

7.5 Conclusion: The chilling effect of the law's journalism confusion

This chapter has investigated how three areas of Australian law might deal with three different youtubers and their work: friendlyjordies and shield laws; Money & Macro and defamation law; and Punter's Politics and the NMBC. The outcomes of this analysis are best described as mixed.

The friendlyjordies example shows that, to be confident in protecting the identity of an informant, a youtuber has to be familiar with multiple different legal definitions of journalist in just one area of law. Each of the three Evidence Acts discussed in this chapter has its own definition of journalist. In addition to Evidence Acts, journalist source protection provisions are found in other statutes, which also vary significantly. The *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) (s 202(4)), *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Cth) (s 31(2)), *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (s 66(1A)) and *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) (s 205D(2)) all have shield law provisions. With these Acts included, in this one area of law, there are six contrasting definitions for journalist, two undefined journalism understandings, as well as the complete absence of a journalism understanding in the *Evidence Act 2001* (Tas).

The friendlyjordies example also brings to light the impact of professional self-identification on legal privileges of source protection. The professional "identity crisis" of serious youtubers is not merely a quirk or novelty to be noted as interesting. In some areas of law, such as informant source protection, it has serious legal consequences which could expose confidential informants when they thought they were protected. In the Australian context at least, if serious youtubers take on confidential informants, their professional identity and motivations should be clearly made public if they are to have a strong argument for journalistic source protection as it is currently formulated in law. As the friendlyjordies example showed, not having such a position made clear lowers the chance that sources identities can be protected.

The issue of whether serious youtubers are journalists in shield laws is one key step in legal source protection. It is widely recognised that the inability to access source protections can have a chilling effect that can negatively impact the conduct of public interest journalism and the free flow of information (Lukacs, 2023, p. 89; Ryan, 2014, p. 353). In Chapter 5, it was demonstrated that serious youtubers do produce public interest journalism. Statutory definitions of journalist that exclude these youtubers from legal source protection do so at the detriment of society as, for no good reason, the exclusion stifles the work of individuals who act as watchdogs and help to keep governments and institutions accountable.

The Money & Macro example highlights that in defamation law there is no definition of journalist that a youtuber needs to meet. Rather the public interest defence can be invoked by youtubers irrespective of the professional label they identify with. What matters more is that the videos published are in the public interest and the youtuber reasonably believes that publishing their work is in the public interest. This is a highly significant finding. My analysis has shown that some serious youtubers produce public interest journalism; and my analysis in this chapter shows

that these serious youtubers can potentially, depending on the specific nature of their videos, succeed if they invoke the public interest defence in response to a defamation suit. In defamation law following the amendments of 2021, youtubers are on the same footing as traditional journalists. Both will be equally protected if their work is in the public interest.

The Punter's Politics example shows how attempts to redirect funding to journalism, and specifically public interest journalism in the shape of "core news", are unlikely to benefit individuals or organisations that primarily produce platform journalism. However, that is not because they fail to deliver "core news". While Punter's Politics produces content that seems to be core news, the channel is unlikely to be accepted to either the NMBC/NBI or the Journalism Assistance Fund program. The sticking point is the lack of a formalised and published set of editorial standards, but this is not an insurmountable obstacle. As my analysis showed, Punter's Politics would seemingly be eligible for funding under the NMBC/NBI and JAF program if the channel were subject to a professional standards scheme.

If a YouTube-focused media business such as Punter's Politics did have such a formalised set of standards and thus qualified to register under the NMBC/NBI, it would raise serious questions that have implications that go beyond those schemes. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the NMBC was established in order to "address bargaining power imbalances between digital platforms and Australian news businesses" (Dwyer & Wilding, 2023, p. 6). A clear distinction is made with digital platforms on one side and news businesses on the other. A youtuber registering their business under the code does not logically fit this purpose because it exists on a digital platform and benefits from the platform's ability to attract advertisers. Platform-based media organisations, such as youtubers, were clearly not the intended beneficiaries of the NMBC, but they can produce public interest journalism. Architects of future regulation could improve

outcomes if they keep in mind that platforms are not merely a place of distribution, that platform-based media outlets exist and that these outlets may produce platform journalism that is in the public interest. This is a complex issue that must contend with the question of whether the bargaining relationship between serious youtubers (among others) and digital platforms is fair, or whether some redistribution of revenue is needed, as it has been found to be with traditional news businesses.

The unnecessary complexity of journalism-related definitions has a significant impact on small media outlets and independent media producers, such as serious youtubers, who lack the organisational resources of major news corporations. It creates unfairness in the news media market. The lack of consistency could also have a chilling effect on public interest journalism created by serious youtubers. This chilling effect could come about because of the uncertainty around whistleblower protection and because government financial support is directed elsewhere. One exception appears to be defamation law, where traditional journalists and youtubers are now treated equally.

Chapter 8 – Discussion and conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In contemporary society, anyone with a phone and internet connection can publish content. This has meant that media professionals, journalism researchers, lawmakers and audiences in the 21st century need to wrestle with questions around what journalism is, and what makes someone a journalist. A common response to this challenge has been to apply a sociological theoretical lens whereby the job of journalist is a starting point, and the professional field of journalism is analysed and compared to groups perceived, from the outset, to be outside that field. These sociology-based approaches often draw heavily on Bourdieu's field theory (Benson & Neveu, (2004). However, this approach is unfairly stacked against newcomers from outside traditional channels, and luckily there is a different approach. In the 21st century media ecosystem, as this thesis has shown, the democratic functions of journalism approach is particularly useful for analysing journalism's emergence and evolution on digital platforms.

Public interest journalism is important for society, and this thesis has shown that it is being performed by independent youtubers. If regulators, and society more broadly, are serious about protecting and fostering public interest journalism, then public interest journalism on platforms such as YouTube needs to be acknowledged and accepted. This may not be an easy task for those who have internalised a "look" and "feel" of journalism that is based around the aesthetics of newspapers or television news anchors in suits. However, to protect and foster public interest journalism there cannot be a narrow focus on ideas around a traditional journalism profession or occupation. We need to move beyond discussions centred around the dichotomy of insiders and

outsiders of the journalism field. There needs to be an understanding of journalism that prioritises its purpose of performing key democratic functions for society.

The fact that youtubers are creating public interest journalism has interesting financial and legal implications. The societal significance attached to public interest journalism has led to numerous grants that support news media organisations and to laws and regulations that provide journalists with special privileges, exemptions and defences. To date, there has been no serious consideration of whether youtubers who produce public interest journalism should be able to receive such financial and legal benefits – assuming, of course, they are prepared to accept the recognition of their work as journalism or of themselves as journalists.

The following three sections bring together the findings of this thesis in an exploration of key opportunities that emerge. First, I will discuss the significance of serious youtubers and platform journalism. Second, I will discuss the value of a democratic functions approach to defining journalism in Australian law. Third, I will outline the benefits that such a definition has for various stakeholders.

8.2 Serious youtubers produce public interest journalism

8.2.1 Serious youtubers constitute an emerging profession

In Chapter 4, the analysis of interviews with 20 youtubers, from channels with substantial followings, contributed to the literature by clarifying, with empirical data, the categories of "youtuber" and "serious youtuber", the latter of which I developed for this research. This effort

moves beyond a common, one-size-fits-all approach to YouTube where terms such as youtuber, content creator and influencer are vague, undefined, and either applied in an "I know it when I see it" way, or used unhelpfully to refer to anyone who uploads content to the platform. In this thesis, a "youtuber" was defined as an independent content creator who speaks face-to-camera in planned, pre-recorded and edited videos which are created specifically for publication on YouTube. A "serious youtuber" was then conceptualised as a sub-category of youtuber who regularly publishes videos about serious topics such as political, social, or economic issues.

The term "serious youtuber" was originally developed for this thesis as a category for sample selection. However, analysis of interviews in Chapter 4 revealed that there was much more in common among interviewees than just that their videos were about serious topics. Interviewees shared norms and practices in areas that included aesthetics, ethics and business. This thesis articulated a comprehensive list of norms and practices which are common to serious youtubers (see 4.4.1). This is a significant contribution to the literature as previous research has tended to be light on specific details concerning what youtubers actually do (see 4.2). Many of these findings are also likely to apply to other types of youtubers, and potentially also creators on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

The shared norms and practices among interviewees in Chapter 4 suggests that serious youtubers are part of a profession or occupation and are part of a community of practice (see 4.4.4). This nascent profession or occupation of "serious youtuber" is one that goes unrecognised, even by the practitioners themselves, as is evident in the finding that they have a "crisis" of professional identity (see 4.4.4). Serious youtuber interviewees see the label "youtuber" as problematic. "Journalist" is generally not adopted. Other labels, such as "content creator", do not encapsulate the work that they do. While I call them serious youtubers, they struggle to define their

professional selves. Their professional identities lack clarity. This professional identity crisis can have serious legal impacts as it may contribute to serious youtubers not qualifying for legal definitions of journalist, thus leaving them unable to access legal protections for journalists when they otherwise might be eligible for such protections (see 7.2).

Another finding, which supports the argument that serious youtubers ought to be considered as belonging to a profession, is that they take ethics seriously. Adherence to ethical principles or codes is widely regarded as a hallmark of professional practice, no matter the profession. Serious youtubers consider themselves to be ethical media creators. They regulate themselves and their content based on their self-imposed ethics that centre on factual accuracy, source transparency, and minimisation of harm. In his analysis of journalism ethics, Davis argues that professional ethics "applies to people only because they voluntarily submit to it" (Davis, 2010, p. 134). According to this argument, serious youtubers have professional ethics, even if these ethics are not formalised into an official code. What's more, the idea of signing up to a formalised code of ethics was broadly seen as a good thing by serious youtuber interviewees, though concerns were raised. One concern is that such a code would duplicate what already exists in YouTube's policies and guidelines, and therefore only add an additional layer of regulation to serious youtubers, who already feel there is a double standard compared to how traditional journalists are regulated. However, key areas of YouTube's policies fall well short of what is likely to justify the journalism privileges bestowed by law (see 7.2.1).

The issue of whether or not serious youtubers are engaged in a legitimate occupation or profession resembles the early years of journalism professionalisation in the first half of the 20th century, when journalism itself was in the early stage of moving from an "occupation" to a "profession" (Drewry, 1930). A century later, the jury is still out on whether journalists are

professionals. What makes an occupation a profession remains a subject of debate in the context of journalism (González & Echeverría, 2024, p. 1484); and the "professional status" of journalism "has always been fragile" (Schnell, 2016, p. 371). Arguments against considering journalism a profession include journalists' lack of professional autonomy, the financial disconnect between journalists' sources of income and the public they purport to serve, and a lack of professional accountability (Davis, 2010, p. 91). In 2026, the project of making journalism a profession continues with endeavours such as those by the Journalism Australia project by the Alliance for Journalists' Freedom (n.d.). If audiences continue to shift to YouTube for their news, and serious youtubers continue to produce journalism, then the future of journalism may well look more like videos from friendlyjordies and Punter's Politics rather than the newspaper articles of Kate McClymont or the broadcast reports from John Lyons.

This research has shown that, for serious youtubers, professionalism is a real and current issue. The barriers to entry are very low, where anyone with a smartphone and an internet connection can record and upload videos. However, as Deveaux-Isaacs said, "anybody can make a YouTube channel, but not everybody can make it with a YouTube channel" (P. Deveaux-Isaacs, interview with author, January 29, 2024). "Making it" here is in reference to making a financially sustainable career as a youtuber. Compared to journalism, the project of establishing "youtubing" as a profession, with serious youtuber as a subcategory, is still in its early days. A first step would be establishing that being a youtuber is an actual job. As Moran said:

> Unionisation and recognition of youtubers as workers is something that needs to happen legally, as well as culturally, because people don't take it seriously enough. It's also not that easy. It requires quite a lot of different skills and perseverance, as well as effort. And yeah, it's a job. It's a job like any other at the end of the day (C. Moran, interview with author, December 5, 2023).

This thesis has demonstrated that "serious youtubers" show the hallmarks of an emerging profession, a profession in which journalism scholars are likely to find public interest journalism on YouTube. It is significant that serious youtubers are able to "make it" producing public interest journalism on YouTube, while a much more common, and perhaps easier, path is that of an influencer whose motivations are more in line with promoting brands, making money, and becoming a celebrity.

8.2.2 Platform journalism is here now, and it's having an impact

In Chapter 5, I found that serious youtubers do produce public interest journalism. They produce videos that inform the public about public interest issues, contribute to public sphere deliberation, and sometimes even investigate people in power. The approach taken to assessing youtubers is novel. This is the first study to approach YouTube content creators by assessing them via the lens of journalism's democratic functions. In doing so, this thesis goes to the core of journalism, its fundamental purpose, rather than comparing youtubers with a normative sociological journalist profession.

The analysis in Chapter 5 also found that the public interest journalism being published by serious youtubers was of a new form of journalism – platform journalism. The ways in which journalism is done online is broadly called "digital journalism" in the literature. Digital journalism is the name given to "genres and modes of journalistic storytelling that exploit the interactive multimedia affordances of digital media technologies and the Internet" (Burgess & Hurcombe, 2019, p. 361). However, digital journalism is overly broad for our purposes. Platform journalism is a narrower and more specific concept, one that fits within digital journalism. Introduced in Chapter 5, I defined "platform journalism" as journalism that is created with a specific digital

platform in mind, and where the creator adopts norms and common practices of the platform. The platform journalism of focus for this thesis is that which can be found on YouTube, though, as suggested in Chapter 6, an opportunity for further research exists in studying platform journalism on TikTok and Instagram as interviewees from the ABC's vertical video team referred to the unique norms and practices of those platforms.

The youtuber practices concerning aesthetics were shown, in Chapter 6, to have been explicitly adopted by traditional journalists at the ABC. This, combined with the moves of youtubers into reporting on and discussing newsworthy topics, seems to indicate that there is a process of convergence occurring where serious youtubers and traditional journalists are evolving towards a common, novel set of practices. Based on my findings, each side of this convergence has differing motivations. Serious youtubers are motivated by a desire to share knowledge in an ethical way, increasingly about newsworthy topics. This is resulting in serious youtubers developing original practices, some of which align with ethical journalism norms (see 5.5.2). However, traditional journalists, represented in this thesis by the ABC interviewees in Chapter 6, are adapting their journalism practices by explicitly copying content creators, especially those on YouTube, in an explicitly stated effort to gain audiences, especially young audiences.

To be clear, while my research has identified public interest journalism on YouTube, this does not mean all journalism should be produced on digital platforms. In fact, unchecked private ownership of platforms that dominate the public sphere can threaten or weaken democratic processes (Cohen & Fung, 2023; Smyrnaios & Baisnée, 2023). One form this threat can take, raised by interviewees in Chapter 4, is the suppression of videos that include discussion of serious topics in the public interest (see 4.4.2). The benefits and dangers of digital infrastructure go beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, what I do here is bring to light a form of public

interest journalism that has gone unacknowledged. The public interest journalism that is produced by serious youtubers is important to recognise, including because it attracts large audiences and can make money, though platform journalism is highly unlikely to be in itself sufficient for a healthy news media ecosystem.

8.2.3 Platform Journalism: A promising new business model for journalism

Identifying serious youtubers and their platform journalism shows a way forward for profitable journalism production on digital platforms. Chapters 5 and 6 found that popular platform journalism videos are being produced by serious youtubers and traditional journalists at the ABC. This shows that there is audience demand for such journalism. Producing platform journalism and adopting the youtuber business model, or elements of it, is an opportunity for news media organisations and independent journalists to produce journalism that pays (Hall, 2024, p. 28). This is especially relevant considering traditional journalism businesses have often had major funding problems – leading to journalists losing their jobs and newsrooms to shut down (Jaspan, 2024; Marjoribanks et al., 2022, pp. 3–4).

The youtuber business model is based on multiple core revenue streams (see 4.4.3). The core streams are the "revenue tripod" of Google AdSense, sponsorships, and audience contributions. Another common, yet minor, source of income is selling channel-related merchandise. Independent journalism producers and traditional news media outlets are both in a position to adopt this business model or integrate elements of it into their current business. This provides great opportunity to reach a wider audience and increase the profitability of their journalism work. However, the youtuber business model involves more than just posting videos on YouTube and setting up a Patreon account.

This research shows that video presentation is an important part of the youtuber business model (see 4.4.1). It is important as it allows for a connection to be built with the audience. This is a prerequisite for the audience contribution revenue stream. Norms and common practices of the platform need to be applied. The videos should not appear to be too polished or corporate. The channel should have a main presenter who becomes its face. The presenter should speak directly to the audience through the camera in a way that is personable and conversational. Clothing should be informal. Set design should resemble a regular room in a house or a low budget set with a simple background, such as bookshelves illuminated by coloured lighting. The way videos are edited is also important. Editing norms include jump cuts, axial cuts, and text directly addressing the viewer, especially to explain a mistake or give a post-production update (see 4.4.1).

Ethical practices of serious youtubers also appear to be a factor in a channel's success. Interviewees in Chapter 4 stressed that source transparency and clearly signposted sponsor segments are key. Source transparency and sponsor transparency, according to the serious youtuber interviewees, have become audience expectations for videos about serious topics. Another source of pressure to adopt this practice comes from fellow serious youtubers. Most of the serious youtubers from Chapter 4 have produced fact-checking videos on the videos of other youtubers. Practices around source transparency include displaying sources on screen while they are being discussed and including links to sources in video description sections. Key practices regarding sponsor transparency include informing audiences of a video sponsor in the first minute of a video and ensuring that "ad read" segments are clearly signposted. These practices reinforce the self-imposed standards around accuracy and source transparency as well as providing a watch on unethical business practices such as not declaring sponsorship.

A significant example of youtuber factchecking involves former Vox journalist Johnny Harris. After leaving Vox and becoming a full-time independent youtuber, Harris found himself on the receiving end of several fact-checking videos from serious youtubers, including four interviewees from Chapter 4, who saw his practices as potentially compromising the integrity of serious youtubers. Harris was critiqued for his practices around factual accuracy, source transparency, and sponsorship declarations (Boodt [The Present Past], 2022; McBeth [Ryan McBeth], 2024c; Nicholas [Tom Nicholas], 2021; Schasfoort [Money & Macro], 2026). However, following good faith engagement with some of those critiquing him, Harris changed his practices and now includes hyperlinked sources in the description of his videos (J. Boodt, interview with author, June 16, 2023).

In the first half of 2026, two of Australia's most popular and highest paid radio and television personalities, Kyle Sandilands and Karl Stefanovic left mass media to build audiences as content creators on digital platforms who discuss serious topics. For Stefanovic the platform of choice is YouTube. For Sandilands, the platform is yet to be revealed, however, YouTube is likely. This appears to be a trend where the biggest "stars" of traditional media are attempting to break into the professional field of serious youtubers. If so, these ex-traditional media personalities could find themselves, as Harris did, on the receiving end of factchecking videos that seek to uphold the self-imposed standards of serious youtubers. In fact, the critiques have already started, with a Punter's Politics video questioning the ethics practices involved in Stefanovic's YouTube channel (Michalski [Punter's Politics], 2026c). And friendlyjordies, published a 15-minute video that, among other issues, critiqued Stefanovic's motivations and sponsorship decisions (Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], 2026).

8.3 Bringing journalism's purpose to the forefront

The findings in this thesis suggest that policies, regulation, and law that attempt to foster or protect public interest journalism need to wrestle with the idea that public interest journalism is being created in the form of platform journalism. This is especially significant for policies that seek to address imbalances between digital platforms and news media organisations, given that platform journalism businesses are embedded in platforms.

If public interest journalism is to be protected and fostered, including on digital platforms such as YouTube, then public interest journalism needs to be defined. Based on my analysis of academic literature and journalism-related law, I argue that the best definition for this purpose is based on journalism's core democratic functions, such as the definition for public interest journalism developed and applied in this thesis. This definition puts less focus on who a journalist is, and more focus on the practices and purpose of journalism, and on whether or not a person produces media content that performs one or more of the democratic functions.

8.3.1 Journalism in Australian law: Moving in the wrong direction

The law's response to the shift from a mass media age to a hybrid media age has been to create an ever-increasing number of journalism-related legal definitions since the early 1990s, when the first definition of journalist was introduced into Commonwealth law (Greste, 2023, p. 30). Chapter 3 showed that Australian law currently has 27 different, often contradictory, journalism-related statutory definitions, and that these definitions are contained in 37 separate Acts. Additionally, many Acts have undefined understandings of journalism. Journalism

understandings without definitions exist when, for example, a journalist is explicitly given a privilege or exemption under an Act, yet there is no definition or explanation given as to what a journalist does or who qualifies to be considered a journalist.

The large number of journalism definitions in law is problematic because it clouds what it means for something to be journalism. This produces confusion for both media producers and audiences, particularly since these definitions are often contradictory. It also shows that lawmakers, while acknowledging that journalism is important, are unable to agree on what it is about journalism that needs to be protected and fostered. Unfortunately, the current trend in Australian law is to continue to increase the number of unique journalism understandings and definitions, thus adding to the confusion.

The impacts of such confusion are far reaching – not just because the law defines what is permissible, but also because the law has power to shape societal norms, values and behaviour (Bénabou & Tirole, 2026, p. 732; Licht, 2008, p. 717; Scott, 2000, p. 1603). It does this through mechanisms such as statutes and court judgments, as empirical research has shown. In their study of Covid-19 lockdown laws, Galbiati et al. found "causal evidence" that the law directly impacts "perceptions of social norms" by acting as an "informational channel" whereby the law's communicative power plays a greater role than any formal enforcement (2021, p. 11). In another study by Lane et al., participants were presented with hypothetical scenarios involving laws related to illegal activities (Lane et al., 2023, p. 1265). The study found that "an action's legal status does causally influence its normative appropriateness" and that the law can "affect behaviour by strengthening the social disapproval towards illegal actions" (Lane et al., 2023, p. 1289). As legal understandings of journalism have the potential to shape societal norms and behaviours, it is important to understand exactly what those understandings look like.

The most recent journalism definitions to be included in Australian law are the uniquely defined "journalist" and "journalistic material", added in 2024 to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (Cth), s 15(2), (3)), for the purposes of providing an exemption for journalists from the newly enacted tort for serious invasions of privacy. This amendment unnecessarily introduced a 12th definition of "journalist" to Australian statutory law. Each one of these 12 definitions is unique, and many are inconsistent. Moreover, "journalistic material" is a novel content-based term which is uniquely defined in the *Privacy Act* and, with its inclusion of "character", is much broader and vaguer than pre-existing content-based definitions.

In 2024, the Federal Parliament debated, and ultimately rejected, the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 (Cth) (Davis & Molitorisz, 2024). Had it passed, it would have introduced two novel content-based journalism definitions, "professional news content" and "news content", to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth), bringing the total number of journalism definitions to 29 (Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 s 16). Both definitions are unique and do not match any existing definition, though they contain some journalism themes that exist in other definitions. This Bill was not included in Chapter 3 as the Bill failed. It is discussed here to highlight the trend in Australian law to create new journalism related definitions.

Those new definitions keep coming. At the time of writing the Western Australian parliament has a Bill before it that, if passed, will introduce two brand new journalism understandings into Australian law. The Bill creates new offences around publishing media content that includes criminal activity (Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA), s 221I (2)). The Bill also includes a special defence to publishing such material if it was "disseminated

by a journalist in the course of their activities as a journalist; or a news publisher in the course of their activities as a news publisher" (Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA), s 221J (1)(b)). This Bill does not define journalist or news publisher. Rather the approach is unique in that there are quasi-definitions for the terms. The Bill sets out considerations that a court may take into account in determining whether a person is a journalist or whether an entity is a news publisher and these considerations amount to very detailed de facto definitions (Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA), s 221J (2-3). To determine if a person is a "journalist" for the purposes of this defence:

> a court may consider the following matters – whether the person is regularly engaged and active in gathering and assessing information about matters of public interest; and preparing the information, or providing comment or opinion on or analysis of the information, for publication or broadcast, whether or not by a news publisher; whether the person complies with a recognised professional standard or code of practice in carrying out the activities referred to in paragraph; any other matter the court considers relevant (Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA), s 221I(2)).

In deciding whether an organisation is a "news publisher", the Bill prescribes:

> a court may consider the following matters – whether the entity is engaged in the business of publishing or broadcasting news, or comment or opinion on or analysis of news, to the public or a section of the public; whether the entity is a public or community broadcasting service engaged in publishing or broadcasting news, or comment or opinion on or analysis of news, to the public or a section of the public; whether the entity complies with a recognised professional standard or code of practice in publishing or broadcasting; any other matter the court considers relevant (Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA), s 221I(3)).

Australian law is moving in the wrong direction. Increasing the number of journalism-related understandings and definitions adds unnecessary complexity that further muddies the waters around how journalism should be understood. These additional definitions are adding to the confusion, rather than remedying it.

8.3.2 Journalism's purpose: Performing democratic functions

If we are to define journalism in a way that best supports society, then the best place to start, I have shown, is an activity-based definition that states what journalism should involve, rather than focusing on professionalism or occupation. The definition should also prioritise the fundamental purpose of journalism, which I have articulated in the shape of three core democratic functions. Such a definition makes clear that journalism's purpose is not to be simply a set of media practices, a specific occupation or a business model. Public interest journalism, when defined by its core democratic functions, goes to the heart of what we, as a society, want from journalism. This definition is not just theoretical. It is also a highly practical approach for solving real-world issues around journalism's place in today's hybrid media society.

Of the 27 journalism definitions in Australian law, three are close to the definition of public interest journalism that I propose. These definitions all include at least one democratic function of journalism. One existing definition that incorporates journalism's democratic functions is the News Media Bargaining Code's definition of "core news". Core news is defined as "content that reports, investigates or explains: issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in public debate and in informing democratic decision-making; or current issues or events of public

significance for Australians at a local, regional or national level" (*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth), s 52A).

A second existing statutory definition that incorporates journalism's democratic functions is found in the *Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) s 14R(1), the *Summary Offences Act 2005* (Qld) Schedule 2, and the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) 205C. In these Acts, a person is a journalist "if the person is engaged and active in gathering and assessing information about matters of public interest; and preparing the information, or providing comment or opinion on or analysis of the information, for publication in a news medium" (*Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld), s 205C; *Evidence Act 1977* (QLD) s 14R(1); *Summary Offences Act 2005* (Qld) Schedule 2).

A third existing definition is found in the *Evidence Act 2011* (NT). In this Act journalist is defined as "a person who: obtains new or noteworthy information about matters of public interest; and (b) deals with the information by: preparing the information for a news medium; or providing comment, opinion or analysis of the information for a news medium" (*Evidence Act 2011* (NT), s 127A(6)).

Each of these definitions include reference to the democratic function of informing the public about public interest issues as well as the function of contributing to public sphere deliberation. While none is as comprehensive as the definition proposed in this thesis, if any one of these three were universally adopted across Australian law, it would constitute a major improvement to the current state of confusion and incoherence.

Alternatively, the approach taken in defamation law would also be a big improvement if universally adopted. That approach involves protecting the public interest, rather than protecting "journalists" or "journalism" (see 3.5.6). While the Defamation Acts contain no journalism-related terms, the public interest defence could be adopted in other areas of law and adapted to work in place of existing terms and their definitions. This is because the focus is on whether media content and its publication is in the public interest. There is also a focus on the activities that go into a publication. Despite (or perhaps because of) its lack of journalism-related definitions, the public interest defence has an understanding of journalism that includes journalism's democratic functions.

If any of the above approaches were adopted universally in Australian law, consistency would replace confusion in a way that better protects the public interest. However, we can do better still. Rather than adopting an existing legal definition, we could adopt the definition of public interest journalism developed in this thesis, which is grounded in journalism theory, Australian law and the three core democratic functions of journalism:

> ***Public interest journalism*** **is the editorially independent activity, guided by ethical considerations, of collecting, interpreting and regularly publishing verifiable newsworthy content on public interest issues so that people may be better informed and engage in better decision making in the public sphere.**

This definition can effectively assess the activities of media creators and their content, whether they be on YouTube, TikTok, or working for a newspaper. Such assessment could be done as part of journalism studies research, or for activities such as audits for journalism grants. The definition can also be applied to legal contexts. It could be the basis for a statutory definition that unites the many areas of law that impact journalism. This original definition has a potential for significant benefits.

8.4 Benefits of a definition based on democratic functions

8.4.1 Benefits for audiences

This research addresses a common concern, articulated by Hurcombe, regarding sorting quality content creators from "malicious actors who claim to be 'journalists' for political or financial reasons" (Hurcombe, 2025, p. 1532). By providing a way to identify youtubers who produce public interest journalism, this research provides a way to assure audiences of a certain quality of platform journalism. It also contributes to media literacy by giving people a better understanding of what to look out for when assessing youtubers. Media literacy is one potential solution to the information disorder that prevails online and the proposed definition of public interest journalism, combined with the analysis of serious youtubers, provides a useful framework for media literacy education for YouTube audiences. There are a number of elements that audiences can look out for when deciding on which video creators to trust as public interest journalism producers. Among other elements these include:

- the transparent use of quality sources to back up fact claims;
- a willingness to correct errors; and
- evidence of fairness, for example by offering right of reply.

8.4.2 Benefits for media creators

For independent media creators, such as serious youtubers, a clear journalism definition based on journalism's democratic functions would provide more certainty around whether or not they are eligible for legal exemptions and privileges. This would be especially beneficial considering

independent serious youtubers lack the significant legal resources available to traditional journalists employed at major news media organisations. It would also provide clarity and guidance for the type of content they should be producing, and how they should be producing it, if they want to create public interest journalism and receive legal journalism protections. Also, by having a clear definition against which they can be measured by audiences, they can better build trust with their audiences which can potentially lead to increased audience-based revenue.

8.4.3 Benefits for lawmakers

The proliferation of journalism definitions in statutory law unnecessarily complicates the work of legal practitioners such as lawyers and judges. As constitutional law scholar Ananian-Welsh wrote in her 2022 review of statutory journalism definitions, a consistent journalism understanding in Australian law would work towards "easing the work of media lawyers who operate in a national media landscape" (Ananian-Welsh, 2022, p. 478).

Such work is complicated by the nature of case law. Case law, with its narrow focus on applying specific legal areas to unique facts, works to entrench divergent journalism understandings that originate from statutory definitions. Flick J spoke to this when discussing the divergent definitions within Evidence Acts. He said, "different judicial approaches can only be expected. So much may, perhaps, be inevitable – even if regrettable" (*Kumova v Davison* [2021] FCA 753, p. 6). When there are so many definitions in the statutes, case law will not lead to a clarification of journalism in law; rather, it can only do the opposite.

The current mess of journalism definitions in the law is indeed regrettable. A single, clear definition of journalism could potentially be legislated via an omnibus-style amendment bill such as the Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008, which amended 68 separate Acts "to eliminate discrimination against same-sex couples and the children of same-sex relationships" (Explanatory Memorandum, Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008 (Cth), p. 1; Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008 (Cth)). A similarly wide-ranging Bill could amend the 59 Acts identified in Chapter 3 as having journalism understandings by including the public interest journalism definition proposed in this thesis. As other Acts require journalism understandings, they would then be able to adopt this definition rather than reinventing the wheel as has so often been the case with previous journalism-related definitions.

8.4.4 Benefits for funders

Governments globally make efforts to support journalism. However, definitions and descriptions of journalism in government support programs vary and most are "vaguely defined" (Koskie & Wilding, 2026, p. 113). A practical outcome of defining public interest journalism based on its democratic functions is that it allows a consistent way forward for assessing the outputs of recipients of journalism-related funding. This approach ensures, as best as it can, that government funding for journalism does indeed promote the public interest.

Journalism funding programs from the private sector would also benefit from a clear definition based on journalism's democracy-supporting purpose. One major example of corporate sector journalism funding is the Google News Initiative's News Equity Fund, which in 2020 provided

funding for "small and medium sized publishers creating original journalism for underrepresented audiences around the world" (Google News Initiative, n.d.). However, the News Equity Fund's application terms and conditions do not include the word journalism and, despite requiring the regular publication of "original news content", do not define news content (Google, n.d.). The inclusion of a definition based on journalism's democratic functions, could improve the outcomes of programs such as this.

8.4.5 Benefits for researchers

By developing a definition of journalism based on journalism's democratic functions, this thesis opens up avenues for future research. This is especially the case for research on social media platforms where the exact nature of content creators is unclear, even for the creators themselves. Rather than compare content creators to an idealised, and arguably non-existent, journalism profession, researchers would be better able to assess their work and practices in terms of whether journalism's democratic functions are being performed.

This thesis also proposes the concepts of "serious youtuber" and "platform journalism". This opens up avenues for further research. For research on YouTube, more research can be done into serious youtubers and their emerging profession. The concept can also be expanded or developed for other platforms. Researchers investigating platform journalism on TikTok and Instagram could benefit from beginning their sample selection process by focusing on *serious tiktokers* and *serious instagrammers*.

8.5 Conclusion

Serious youtubers produce public interest journalism that is tailor-made to suit YouTube. This finding constitutes a significant step forward for understanding how journalism is emerging and evolving on digital platforms. In Chapters 2 and 3, I analysed journalism literature and Australian law to propose definitions of "journalism" and "public interest journalism" for the task of assessing youtubers. In Chapter 4, I conducted 20 interviews with select youtubers, leading to a finding that "serious youtuber" is an occupation where practitioners share norms and common practices in presentation, ethics, and business. In Chapter 5, I analysed three channels in more depth to find that serious youtubers produce public interest journalism. In Chapter 6 I showed that mainstream, traditional journalists have consciously adopted aesthetic norms and practices of content creators, especially youtubers. And in Chapter 7, I applied legal definitions and understandings of journalism to show that significant issues flow from the lack of clarity and cohesion around journalism definitions in law. Serious youtubers may produce public interest journalism which benefits society, but whether they are able to receive legal journalism protections remains uncertain and inconsistent.

Once journalism is seen in terms of its purpose, it makes less sense to think of it as in crisis. Rather, by demonstrating that serious youtubers produce platform journalism, this thesis has shown that journalism is being created by a greater variety of media practitioners than in the past. Moreover, such an approach allows a clear articulation of the type of journalism that we want to see thriving, be that in the traditional media, or in newer media, including on YouTube. An articulation of journalism that focuses on its purpose, on its democratic functions, allows for more effective funding programs to be created, better policy and legislation, and increased clarity

for media producers and audiences. This can then lead to a healthier media ecosystem, one that the public can once again come to trust.

Reference List

@12undeadz. (2024, August 22). *I'm a big fan so far. Impressive background information on major developments in a compact format* [Comment on "Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgwvVzfvyi2OV5mVDa14AaABAg.A7RhtoogUhBA7SUFKLH4Ea

ABC News Australia [@abcnewsaus]. (n.d.). TikTok. Retrieved 4 May 2025, from https://www.tiktok.com/@abc

ABC News (Australia). (n.d.). [*Media Bites* Playlist]. YouTube. Retrieved 21 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3pnoELWCyM&list=PLn2RjxYNpcaxPCXIu2oqUrH_MOSlw8iQ1

ABC News (Australia). (2021, October 4). *IN FULL: John Barilaro announces his resignation as NSW Deputy Premier | ABC News*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/TcdxShksGBY?t=304

ABC News (Australia). (2024, December 5). *Media Bites goodbye: Our greatest hits and misses along with lots of laughs | Media Bites Finale*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Z3pnoELWCyM

ABC News In-depth. (2025, March 8). *Who will say 'no' to Trump this time? | If You're Listening*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/rXQMr5eY--c

Ahmad, M., & Wilkins, S. (2025). Purposive sampling in qualitative research: A framework for the entire journey. *Quality & Quantity*, *59*(2), 1461–1479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-024-02022-5

Ahva, L., & Steensen, S. (2020). Journalism theory. In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *The handbook of journalism studies* (2nd ed., pp. 38–54). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315167497-3

Al Muderis v Nine Network Australia Pty Limited [2023] FCA 1623.

Al Muderis v Nine Network Australia Pty Limited [2025] FCA 909.

Alliance for Journalists' Freedom (n.d.) *Journalism Australia*. Retrieved 4 May 2026, from https://journalistsfreedom.webflow.io/major-projects/journalism-australia

Allman, K. (2020). Defamation: World's defamation capital no more? NSW passes reforms. *Law Society Journal*, *70*(14), 14.

Ananian-Welsh, R. (2022). Who is a journalist? A critical analysis of Australian statutory definitions. *Federal Law Review*, *50*(4), 449–478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0067205X221126583

Andersen, K., Shehata, A., & Andersson, D. (2023). Alternative news orientation and trust in mainstream media: A longitudinal audience perspective. *Digital Journalism*, *11*(5), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1986412

Anter, L. (2026). How social media affordances shape journalistic content production: A stimulus-based interview study on journalists' perceptions. *Journalism*, *27*(5), 1521–1539. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849251337009

Artemas, K., Vos, T. P., & Duffy, M. (2018). Journalism hits a wall: Rhetorical construction of newspapers' editorial and advertising relationship. *Journalism Studies*, *19*(7), 1004–1020. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1249006

Associated Press. (2025, April 10). *Video shows 4 captive Ukrainian troops killed by men identified as Russian forces*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/HtXZ_5yqyGE

Australian Border Force Act 2015 (Cth).

Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 (Cth).

Australian Broadcasting Corporation v Comalco Ltd (1986) 68 ALR 259.

Australian Business Register. (n.d.). *Current details for ABN 65 349 037 276*. Retrieved 3 March 2026, from https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=65349037276

Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005 (Cth).

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2018a). *Broadcasting Services Local Programming Determination 2018*. https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2018L00382/asmade/text

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2018b). *Investigation concepts: Accuracy*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2018c). *Investigation concepts: Decency, classification, and harm and offence*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2018d). *Investigation concepts: Fairness, impartiality and viewpoints*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2018e). *Investigation report no. BI-360*. https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2019-09/compliance/bi-360-sbs-world-news

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2021a). *ACMA news media bargaining code eligibility assessment report—Chinese News and Media Group*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2021b). *ACMA news media bargaining code eligibility assessment report—CMMA Digital & Print Pty Ltd*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2021c). *ACMA news media bargaining code eligibility assessment report—SGC Media Pty Ltd*.

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2021d). *Investigation report no. BI-587*. https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2021-07/report/bi-587-investigation-report

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2022). *Broadcasting Services (Commercial Radio Current Affairs Disclosure) Standard 2022*. https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L00389/asmade/text

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2024a). *Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio – Local Presence) Licence Condition 2024*. https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L01188/asmade/text

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2024b). *Broadcasting Services (Regional Commercial Radio—Material of Local Significance) Licence Condition 2024*. https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L01189/asmade/text

Australian Communications and Media Authority. (2024c). *Investigation report (consolidated) no. BI-678, BI-680 and BI-681*. https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2024-08/report/investigation-report-and-remedial-directions-radio-2gb-sydney-pty-ltd-radio-3aw-melbourne-pty-ltd-and-radio-4bc-brisbane-pty-limited

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. (2019). *Digital Platforms Inquiry: Final Report*. https://www.accc.gov.au/about-us/publications/digital-platforms-inquiry-final-report

Australian Government. (n.d.). *Grants to assist the sustainability of Australian news publishers*. Business.Gov.Au. Retrieved 3 March 2026, from https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/journalism-assistance-fund#key-documents

Australian Law Reform Commission. (2014). *Serious Invasions of Privacy in the Digital Era*. https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/serious-invasions-of-privacy-in-the-digital-era-alrc-report-123/

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 (Cth).

Bailey v WIN Television NSW Pty Ltd [2020] NSWSC 232.

Balcombe, L., & De Leo, D. (2023). The impact of YouTube on loneliness and mental health. *Informatics*, *10*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/informatics10020039

Banjac, S. (2022). An intersectional approach to exploring audience expectations of journalism. *Digital Journalism*, *10*(1), 128–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1973527

Barilaro v Google LLC [2022] FCA 650.

Bartleman, M., Schapals, A. K., & Dubois, E. (2026). Generative AI and the New Landscape of Automated Journalism: A Systematized Review of 185 Studies (2012–2024). *Journalism and Media*, *7*(39), 1-52. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7010039

Bénabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2026). Laws and norms. *Journal of Political Economy*, *134*(2), 731–772. https://doi.org/10.1086/738343

Benson, R., & Neveu, E. (2004). *Bourdieu and the journalistic field*. Polity Press.

Bhat, I. (2020). *Idea and methods of legal research*. Oxford University Press.

Bizzocchi, J., & Tanenbaum, T. J. (2012). Mass Effect 2: A case study in the design of game narrative. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, *32*(5), 393–404. https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467612463796

Boodt [The Present Past], J. (2022, August 18). *How Johnny Harris Rewrites History*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/pAeoJVXrZo4

Bossio, D. (2023). Journalists on Instagram: Presenting professional identity and role on image-focused social media. *Journalism Practice*, *17*(8), 1773-1789. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.2001359

Bradley, M. (2024, April 4). Seven's chequebook journalism is a disgrace for which it should be held accountable. *Crikey*. https://www.crikey.com.au/2024/04/04/seven-bruce-lehrmann-interview-disgrace/

Braun, J., & Gillespie, T. (2011). Hosting the public discourse, hosting the public: When online news and social media converge. *Journalism Practice*, *5*(4), 383–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2011.557560

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth).

Burgess, J., & Hurcombe, E. (2019). Digital journalism as symptom, response, and agent of change in the platformed media environment. *Digital Journalism*, *7*(3), 359–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1556313

Business Grant Hub. (2025). *Journalism Assistance Fund Program: Grant Opportunity Guidelines*. https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/journalism-assistance-fund

Cam, E., & McCarthy, J. (2023, December 20). Arson charge after YouTube star's house fire. *news.com.au*. https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/crime/charges-laid-over-

alleged-arson-attack-at-friendlyjordies-bondi-home/news-story/2f352d9654d73359c54225a631676eab

Carlson, M., & Berkowitz, D. (2014). 'The emperor lost his clothes': Rupert Murdoch, *News of the World* and journalistic boundary work in the UK and USA. *Journalism*, *15*(4), 389–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913477280

@carlthuresson4967. (2024, August 22). *I have been looking for this kind of 'weekly economic update' for sooo long!* [Comment on "Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgwvVzfvyi2OV5mVDa14AaABAg.A7RhtoogUhBA7Rlo2ZB1IQ

Carson, A. (2020). *Investigative journalism, democracy and the digital age*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315514291

Chau v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd [2019] FCA 185.

Christiano, T. (1996). *The rule of the many: Fundamental issues in democratic theory*. Taylor and Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429495861

Christians, C., Glasser, T., McQuail, D., Nordenstreng, K., & White, R. (2009). *Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies*. University of Illinois Press. http://choicereviews.org/review/10.5860/CHOICE.47-1837

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002 (ACT).

Cohen, J., & Fung, A. (2023). Democratic responsibility in the digital public sphere. *Constellations*, *30*(1), 92–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12670

Commercial Radio Australia. (2017). *Commercial Radio Code of Practice*. https://www.acma.gov.au/commercial-radio-code-practice-2017

Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act

Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates,* House of Representatives, 21 March 2011, 2393-2394 (Andrew Wilkie).

Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024.

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. (2025). *Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice*. https://www.cbaa.org.au/community-broadcasting/codes

Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth).

Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).

Cormack, L., & Hunter, F. (2020, September 19). How to solve a problem like friendlyjordies? Politicians debate new-age commentator. *Sydney Morning Herald*. https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/how-to-solve-a-problem-like-friendlyjordies-politicians-debate-new-age-commentator-20200918-p55x4a.html

Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

Couldry, N. (2017). Reconstructing journalism's public rationale. In C. Peters & M. Broersma (Eds.), *Rethinking journalism again: Societal role and public relevance in a digital age* (pp. 21–34). Routledge.

Court Information Act 2010 (NSW).

Court Procedures Act 2004 (ACT).

Court Security Act 1998 (NT).

Court Security Act 1980 (Vic).

Court Security Act 2005 (NSW).

Court Security Act 2013 (Cth).

Court Security Act 2017 (Tas).

Court Suppression and Non-Publication Orders Act 2010 (NSW).

Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld).

Crimes Act 1900 (ACT).

Crimes Act 1900 (NSW).

Crimes Act 1914 (Cth).

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld).

Criminal Code Act 1924 (Tas).

Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT).

Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth).

Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA).

Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025 (WA).

Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material) Act 2019 (Cth).

Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA).

Criminal Procedure Rules 2005 (WA).

Davis, M. (2010). Why journalism is a profession. In C. Meyers (Ed.), *Journalism ethics: A philosophical approach*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195370805.003.0006

Davis, M., & Molitorisz, S. (2024). Promoting rights and accountability in the regulation of misinformation. *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, *30*(2), 251–278. https://doi.org/10.1080/1323238X.2025.2466862

De Bérail, P., Guillon, M., & Bungener, C. (2019). The relations between YouTube addiction, social anxiety and parasocial relationships with YouTubers: A moderated-mediation model based on a cognitive-behavioral framework. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *99*, 190–204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.007

Deeming v Pesutto (No 3) [2024] FCA 1430.

Defamation Act 2005 (NSW).

Defamation Act 2005 (Qld).

Defamation Act 2005 (SA).

Defamation Act 2005 (Tas).

Defamation Act 2005 (VIC).

Defamation Act 2005 (WA).

Defamation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW).

Degen, M., Olgemöller, M., & Zabel, C. (2024a). Quality journalism in social media – what we know and where we need to dig deeper. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(4), 399–420. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2314204

Degen, M., Olgemöller, M., & Zabel, C. (2024b). The tortured journalists department? Challenges and characteristics of quality journalism on TikTok in Germany. *Emerging Media*, *2*(4), 673–697. https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543241300942

Department of Home Affairs. (2024). *Account takeover warrants*. Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs. https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/national-security/lawful-access-telecommunications/surveillance-legislation-amendment-identify-and-disrupt-act-2021/account-takeover-warrants

Derrick, J. L., Gabriel, S., & Hugenberg, K. (2009). Social surrogacy: How favored television programs provide the experience of belonging. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*(2), 352–362. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.12.003

Desai-Stephens, A. (2022). The infrastructure of engagement: Musical aesthetics and the rise of YouTube in India. *Twentieth-Century Music*, *19*(3), 444–471. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572222000299

Deuze, M. (2005). What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered. *Journalism*, *6*(4), 442–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884905056815

Deuze, M. (2012). *Media life*. Polity Press.

Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism. *Journalism*, *19*(2), 165–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916688550

Deuze, M., & Witschge, T. (2020). *Beyond journalism*. Polity Press.

Deveaux-Isaacs [Foreign Man in a Foreign Land], P. (2023, October 16). *The 'S*ssification' Problem*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/GBO1-WfSDO4

District Court Act 1973 (NSW).

Djerf-Pierre, M., Lindgren, M., & Budinski, M. A. (2019). The role of journalism on YouTube: Audience engagement with "superbug" reporting. *Media and Communication*, *7*(1), 235–247. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i1.1758

Donsbach, W. (2010). Journalists and their professional identities. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 38–48). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869468-7

Drewry, J. E. (1930). Is Journalism a profession?: Some observations on the press: In the negative. *The Sewanee Review*, *38*(2), 191–198.

Dunn, A. (2005). Television news as narrative. In R. Huisman, J. Murphet & H. Fulton (Eds.), *Narrative and media* (pp. 140–152). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511811760.011

Dunstan, J., & Ortola, M. (2024, January 31). An AI-generated image of a Victorian MP raises wider questions on digital ethics. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-02-01/georgie-purcell-ai-image-nine-news-apology-digital-ethics/103408440

Dwyer, T., & Wilding, D. (2023). Introduction. In *Media pluralism and online news: The consequences of automated curation for society* (pp. 1–27). Intellect.

Egan, J., Robertson, C. T., Arguedas, A., Newman, N., Nielsen, R. K., Mukherjee, M., & Fletcher, R. (2026). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2026*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2619576

Eichhorn, K. (2020). Girls in the public sphere: Dissent, consent, and media making. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *35*(103), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2019.1661771

Eisenberg, J., & Markus, T. (2026). *Funding the way forward for Australian news: A review of local and international funding distribution mechanisms*. Centre for Media Transition, University of Technology Sydney. https://doi.org/10.71741/4pyxmbn%20jaq.31260499

@EJD2012. (2023, December 8). *An other problem with CBDC might be that there is a single point of failure* [Comment on "Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpu6G_UlSdM&lc=Ugxpl2iRLcwlJXgS1gN4AaABAg

Eldridge, S. A. (2014). Boundary maintenance and interloper media reaction: Differentiating between journalism's discursive enforcement processes. *Journalism Studies*, *15*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2013.791077

Eldridge, S. A. (2019). Where do we draw the line? Interlopers, (ant)agonists, and an unbounded journalistic field. *Media and Communication*, *7*(4), 8–18. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i4.2295

Elvestad, E., & Phillips, A. (2018). *Misunderstanding news audiences: Seven myths of the social media era*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315444369

Engelke, K. M. (2019). Online participatory journalism: A systematic literature review. *Media and Communication*, *7*(4), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i4.2250

eSafety Commissioner. (2021). *The digital lives of Aussie teens*. https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/digital-lives-aussie-teens

Esser, F., & Neuberger, C. (2019). Realizing the democratic functions of journalism in the digital age: New alliances and a return to old values. *Journalism*, *20*(1), 194–197. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918807067

Evidence Act 1929 (SA).

Evidence Act 1977 (Qld).

Evidence Act 1995 (Cth).

Evidence Act 1995 (NSW).

Evidence Act 2001 (Tas).

Evidence Act 2008 (Vic).

Evidence Act 2011 (ACT).

Evidence Act 2025 (WA).

Evidence Amendment (Journalists' Privilege) Act 2011 (Cth).

Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT).

Explanatory Memorandum, Criminal Code Amendment (Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material) Bill 2019 (Cth).

Explanatory Memorandum, Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Amendment (Journalist Privilege) Bill 2017 (NT).

Explanatory Memorandum, Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008 (Cth).

Explanatory Memorandum, Treasury Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Bill 2021 (Cth).

Explanatory Note, Defamation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW).

Explanatory Notes, Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (Qld).

Farnsworth, V., Kleanthous, I., & Wenger-Trayner, E. (2016). Communities of practice as a social theory of learning: A conversation with Etienne Wenger. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *64*(2), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2015.1133799

Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Act 2021 (Cth).

Federal Court of Australia Act 1976 (Cth).

Ferrer-Conill, R., Foxman, M., Jones, J., Sihvonen, T., & Siitonen, M. (2020). Playful approaches to news engagement. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *26*(3), 457–469. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856520923964

Ferrer-Conill, R., Knudsen, E., Lauerer, C., & Barnoy, A. (2021). The visual boundaries of journalism: Native advertising and the convergence of editorial and commercial content. *Digital Journalism*, *9*(7), 929–951. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1836980

Longo, B., & Price, J. (2024). Building resilience against SLAPPs: protecting investigative journalists and students from traumatic legal threats. In L. Bradley & E. Heywood (Eds.), *Journalism as the fourth emergency service: Trauma and resilience*. Peter Lang.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*, *25*(26), 56–80. https://doi.org/10.2307/466240

Free TV Australia. (2015). *Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice*. https://www.freetv.com.au/resources/code-of-practice/

Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth).

Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA).

Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT).

Friendlyjordies. (n.d.-a). *Friendlyjordies about*. Patreon. Retrieved 3 May 2025, from https://www.patreon.com/friendlyjordies/about

Friendlyjordies. (n.d.-b). *Friendlyjordies description*. YouTube. Retrieved 3 May 2025, from https://www.youtube.com/@friendlyjordies

Frobenius, M. (2014). Audience design in monologues: How vloggers involve their viewers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *72*, 59–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.02.008

Gbogbo, M. (2026, June 28). Karl Stefanovic's "weird personality" might score him a Logie. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-06-28/karl-stefanovic-weird-personality-might-score-him-a-logie/106849584

Galbiati, R., Henry, E., Jacquemet, N., & Lobeck, M. (2021). How laws affect the perception of norms: Empirical evidence from the lockdown. *Plos One*, *16*(9), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256624

Garys Economics. (n.d.). *Garys Economics Description*. YouTube. Retrieved 3 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/@garyseconomics/featured

Garyseconomics. (n.d.). *Garyseconomics About*. Patreon. Retrieved 3 May 2026, from https://www.patreon.com/garyseconomics/about

Geneva Conventions Act 1957 (Cth).

Gewirtz, P. (1996). On 'I know it when I see it'. *The Yale Law Journal*, *105*(4), 1023-1047. https://doi.org/10.2307/797245

Glazunova, S., & Schapals, A. K. (2025). Interlopers by choice, or interlopers by circumstance? Alexey Navalny and alternative journalistic projects in contemporary autocratic Russia. *Journalism*, *26*(5), 1086–1102. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241295525

González, R. A., & Echeverría, M. (2024). What is professional journalism? Conceptual integration and empirical refinement. *Journalism Practice*, *18*(6), 1481–1502. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2098521

Google. (n.d.). *Google News Initiative News Equity Fund: Application Terms and Conditions*. Retrieved 3 May 2025, from https://storage.googleapis.com/media-newsinitiative/documents/GNI_NewsEquityFund_TermsandConditions_Global.pdf

Google News Initiative. (n.d.). *News Equity Fund*. Retrieved 3 March 2025, from https://newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/news-equity-fund/#process

Google Support. (n.d.-a). *Add paid product placements, sponsorships & endorsements*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 16 March 2025, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/154235

Google Support. (n.d.-b). *Channel or account terminations*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2025, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802168

Google Support. (n.d.-c). *Copyright on YouTube*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2025, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2797466

Google Support. (n.d.-d). *Defamation Complaint Requirements*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2025, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6154216

Google Support. (n.d.-e). *File a Trademark Complaint*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2025, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6154228

Google Support. (n.d.-f). *How YouTube search works*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 16 March 2026, from

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/16090438?visit_id=638815605160947728-37981164&p=how_search_works&rd=1

Google Support. (n.d.-g). *Misinformation policies*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10834785

Google Support. (n.d.-h). *Report inappropriate videos, channels & other content on YouTube*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802027

Google Support. (n.d.-i). *YouTube Privacy Guidelines*. YouTube Help. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/7671399

Greste, P. (2023). Defining journalism: How a new approach to a definition could revolutionize media freedom. *Australian Journalism Review*, *45*(1), 27–36. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajr_00116_7

Grint, K. (2017). The freedom of the press in James Mill's political thought. *The Historical Journal*, *60*(2), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X16000224

Habermas, J. (1992). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (T. Burger & F. Lawrence, Trans.). Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (2009). *Europe: The faltering project* (C. Cronin, Trans.). Polity Press.

Habermas, J. (2023). *A new structural transformation of the public sphere and deliberative politics* (C. Cronin, Trans.). Polity Press.

Habermas, J., Lennox, S., & Lennox, F. (1974). The public sphere: An encyclopedia article (1964). *New German Critique*, *1*(3), 49–55. https://doi.org/10.2307/487737

Hågvar, Y. B. (2019). News media's rhetoric on Facebook. *Journalism Practice*, *13*(7), 853–872. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1577163

Hall, C. J. (2024). Youtuber business model: A profitable way forward for longform journalism? In S. Park, C. Fisher, J. Fulton & R. Picard (Eds.), *News industries: Funding innovations and*

futures (pp. 28–29). News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. https://doi.org/10.60836/9341-T760

Hall, C. J. (2025). Platform journalism on YouTube: A democratic functions approach to analysing journalism on digital platforms. *Australian Journalism Review*, *47*(1), 97–115. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajr_00178_7

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad, J., & de Beer, A. (2019a). Exploring the worlds of journalism: An introduction. In T. Hanitzsch, F. Hanusch, J. Ramaprasad & A. de Beer (Eds.), *Worlds of journalism: Journalistic cultures around the globe* (pp. 1–21). Columbia University Press.

Hanitzsch, T., Vos, T., Standaert, O., Hanusch, F., Hovden, J. F., Hermans, L., & Ramaprasad, J. (2019b). Role orientations: Journalists' views on their place in society. In T. Hanitzsch, F. Hanusch, J. Ramaprasad & A. de Beer (Eds.), *Worlds of journalism: Journalistic cultures around the globe* (pp. 161–197). Columbia University Press.

Hanusch, F., & Löhmann, K. (2023). Dimensions of peripherality in journalism: A typology for studying new actors in the journalistic field. *Digital Journalism*, *11*(7), 1292–1310. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2148549

Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2017). What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies*, *18*(12), 1470–1488. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1150193

Hase, V., Boczek, K., & Scharkow, M. (2023). Adapting to affordances and audiences? A cross-platform, multi-modal analysis of the platformization of news on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. *Digital Journalism*, *11*(8), 1499–1520. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2128389

Hayes, K. (2024). The networked newsroom: Navigating new boundaries of work. *Journalism Practice*, *18*(4), 803–817. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1949627

Hendrickx, J. (2023a). From newspapers to TikTok: Social media journalism as the fourth wave of news production, diffusion and consumption. In M. C. Negreira-Rey, J. Vázquez-Herrero, J. Sixto-García & X. López-García (Eds.), *Blurring boundaries of journalism in digital media* (Vol. 140, pp. 229–246). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-43926-1_16

Hendrickx, J. (2023b). The rise of social journalism: An explorative case study of a youth-oriented Instagram news account. *Journalism Practice*, *17*(8), 1810–1825. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.2012500

Hendrickx, J., & Opgenhaffen, M. (2024). Introduction: Understanding social media journalism. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(9), 919–930. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2368861

Hendrickx, J., & Opgenhaffen, M. (2026). Introduction: Why we edited this volume and why it matters. In J. Hendrickx & M. Opgenhaffen (Eds.), *Research Methods for Social Media Journalism*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003568766

Hendrickx, J., & Vázquez-Herrero, J. (2024). Dissecting social media journalism: A comparative study across platforms, outlets and countries. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(9), 1053–1075. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2324318

Heřmanová, M., Eriksson Krutrök, M., & Divon, T. (2026). "The algorithm loves the war": Ambivalent visibility in content creator practices during war. *Continuum*, *40*(2), 160–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2025.2507777

Hermida, A. (2018). Social media and journalism. In A. Hermida, J. Burgess, T. Poell & A. Marwick (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social media* (pp. 497–511). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984066.n28

Hermida, A., & Mellado, C. (2020). Dimensions of social media logics: Mapping forms of journalistic norms and practices on Twitter and Instagram. *Digital Journalism*, *8*(7), 864–884. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1805779

Himma-Kadakas, M., & Ferrer-Conill, R. (2022). Is news engagement worthwhile? Studying young audiences' engagement with youtuber-like news content. *Nordicom Review*, *43*(2), 152–170. https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2022-0010

Himma-Kadakas, M., Rajavee, A., Orgmets, M. L., Eensaar, L., & Kõuts-Klemm, R. (2018). The food chain of youtubers: Engaging audiences with formats and genres. *Observatorio*, 54–75. https://doi.org/10.15847/obsOBS0001385

Hirst, M. (2018). *Navigating Social Journalism: A handbook for media literacy and citizen journalism*. Routledge.

Hive & Wellness Pty Ltd v Mulvany (No 2) [2019] VSC 757.

Holt, K., Ustad Figenschou, T., & Frischlich, L. (2019). Key dimensions of alternative news media. *Digital Journalism*, *7*(7), 860–869. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1625715

Holton, A. E., & Belair-Gagnon, V. (2018). Strangers to the game? Interlopers, intralopers, and shifting news production. *Media and Communication*, *6*(4), 70–78. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1490

Horton, D., & Wohl, Richard. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, *19*(3), 215–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049

Hunter, M. L., Hanson, N., Sabbagh, R., Sengers, L., Sullivan, D., Tait Svith, F., & Thordsen, P. (2011). *Story-based inquiry: A manual for investigative journalists*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Communication and Information Sector, Division for Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193078.nameddest=193103

Hurcombe, E. (2025). Conceptualising the "newsfluencer": Intersecting trajectories in online content creation and platformatised journalism. *Digital Journalism*, *13*(9), 1523–1534. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2024.2397088

Hutchinson, J., Suwana, F., & McTernan, C. (2024). *Social media in society*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-66360-4

Hutchinson, T. (2018). *Researching & writing in law* (4th ed.). Thomson Reuters.

@iammrbeat. (2024, July 20). *Thank you for your tireless efforts exposing these people who profit from the hate and division that is hurting our society.* [Comment on "Who is End Wokeness?"]. Ryan McBeth, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zZeZFs5KLQ&lc=UgwYFIxXr9Lmpwqzq1J4AaABAg

@Indubb. (2025, May 20). *This was one of your best videos, it touched a lot of perspectives and I liked the inclusion of an additional perspective like Singapore.* [Comment on "What the new global economic order will look like"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z_56-BOpcQ&lc=Ugw2rxS3_aOSE-3X7IV4AaABAg

Jacobellis v. Ohio 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964) (Stewart, J., Concurring).

Jarrett, K. (2008). Beyond broadcast yourself™: The future of YouTube. *Media International Australia*, *126*(1), 132–144. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X0812600114

Jaspan, C. (2024, July 7). "Sobering reality": What the future for Australia's media giants looks like. *Sydney Morning Herald*. https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/sobering-reality-what-the-future-for-australia-s-media-giants-looks-like-20240704-p5jr34.html

Jaspan, C. (2025, August 7). News Corp's local papers bleed subscribers, compounding revenue struggles. *Sydney Morning Herald*. https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/news-corp-s-local-papers-bleed-subscribers-compounding-revenue-struggles-20250807-p5ml1y.html

@jellovendigar. (2023, December 8). *Really awesome video. I especially love how you painstakingly try to be objective and level headed when preparing your videos.* [Comment on "Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies"]. Money & Macro, YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpu6G_UlSdM&lc=UgxLiJYe-ag0uzXMP-J4AaABAg

@jellybean_91. (2020, October 21). *As a former political journalist who was born near Wagga Wagga, please don't ever give up* [Comment on "Secret Dictatorship"]. Friendlyjordies, YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AiYvpe6qfs&lc=UgwkX_WZpQlIXeFzQul4AaABAg

Johnston, J., & Wallace, A. (2017). Who is a journalist?: Changing legal definitions in a de-territorialised media space. *Digital Journalism*, *5*(7), 850–867. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2016.1196592

Johnston v Australian Broadcasting Commission (1993) 113 FLR 307.

Karlsson, M. (2021). *Transparency and journalism: A critical appraisal of a disruptive norm*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429340642

Karppinen, K., Moe, H., & Svensson, J. (2008). Habermas, Mouffe and political communication: A case for theoretical eclecticism. *Javnost - The Public*, *15*(3), 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2008.11008973

Kenix, L. (2019). Alternative media and journalistic boundary work. In J. D. Atkinson & L. Kenix (Eds.), *Alternative media meets mainstream politics: Activist nation rising* (pp. 159–174). Lexington Books.

Kenyon, A. T., & Marjoribanks, T. (2008). Chilled journalism?: Defamation and public speech in US and Australian law and journalism. *New Zealand Sociology*, *23*(2), 18–33.

Koliska, M., Moroney, E., & Beavers, D. (2025). Trust through relationships in journalism. *Journalism Studies*, *26*(16), 2092–2109. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2209807

Koskie, T., & Wilding, D. (2026). Subsidising the value of news. In T. Flew, A. Stepnik, & T. Koskie (Eds.), *Valuing news: Digital platforms and journalism futures* (pp. 97–123). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-95-2341-2

Koziol, M. (2020, October 31). Rudd backs friendlyjordies as serious "broadcaster" despite controversial acts. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

https://www.smh.com.au/national/friendlyjordies-a-serious-broadcaster-and-part-of-diverse-media-rudd-20201030-p56a6f.html

Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage.

Kumova v Davison [2021] FCA 753.

Lamerichs, N. (2020). User tactics and algorithms: A digital humanities approach to YouTube and Tumblr. In D. Nguyen, I. Dekker & S. Nguyen (Eds.), *Understanding Media and Society in the Age of Digitalisation* (pp. 35–54). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38577-4_3

Lane, T., Nosenzo, D., & Sonderegger, S. (2023). Law and norms: Empirical evidence. *American Economic Review*, *113*(5), 1255–1293. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20210970

Leach, J. (2014). The poetics of propaganda: Humphrey Jennings and listen to Britain. In B. Grant & J. Sloniowski (Eds.), *Documenting the documentary: Close readings of documentary film and video*. Wayne State University Press.

Legal Profession Admission Board of NSW. (2025). *Guide for Applicants for Admission as a Lawyer*. https://lpab.nsw.gov.au/admission-lawyer/guide-for-applicants-admission.html

Lehrmann v Network Ten Pty Limited (Trial Judgment) [2024] FCA 369.

Lester, J. (2012). Responsible communication on matters of public interest: An analysis of the modification to qualified privilege. *Media and Arts Law Review*, *17*(2), 145–169.

Lewis, R. (2020). "This is what the news won't show you": YouTube creators and the reactionary politics of micro-celebrity. *Television & New Media*, *21*(2), 201–217. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419879919

Lewis, S. C., & Molyneux, L. (2018). A decade of research on social media and journalism: Assumptions, blind spots, and a way forward. *Media and Communication*, *6*(4), 11–23. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1562

Licht, A. N. (2008). Social norms and the law: Why peoples obey the law. *Review of Law & Economics*, *4*(3), 715–750. https://doi.org/10.2202/1555-5879.1232

Lichtenstein, D., Herbers, M. R., & Bause, H. (2021). Journalistic youtubers and their role orientations, strategies, and professionalization tendencies. *Journalism Studies*, *22*(9), 1103–1122. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2021.1922302

Loosen, W., & Schmidt, J.-H. (2016). Multi-method approaches. In T. Witschge, C. W. Anderson, D. Domingo & A. Hermida (Eds.), *The sage handbook of digital journalism* (pp. 562–576). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957909.n37

Lotun, S., Lamarche, V. M., Samothrakis, S., Sandstrom, G. M., & Matran-Fernandez, A. (2022). Parasocial relationships on YouTube reduce prejudice towards mental health issues. *Scientific Reports*, *12*(16565), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-17487-3

Lukacs, A. (2023). Evaluating the merits of Queensland's new shield law: Reform lessons for the rest of Australia. *The University of Queensland Law Journal*, *42*(1), 65–101. https://doi.org/10.38127/uqlj.v42i1.6549

MacDowell, J. (2025). Breaking and making the fourth wall on YouTube: Direct address and audiovisual Narration in Online Video. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *42*(6), 1399–1434. https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2024.2444051

Magistrates Court (General) Rules 2005 (WA).

Malik, A., & Shapiro, I. (2017). What's digital? What's journalism? In B. Franklin & S. A. Eldridge (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to digital journalism studies* (pp. 15–24). Routledge.

Manoukian, S. (2010). Where is this place? Crowds, audio-vision, and poetry in postelection Iran. *Public Culture*, *22*(2), 237–263. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2009-027

Marjoribanks, T., Zion, L., O'Donnell, P., Sherwood, M., Dodd, A., & Ricketson, M. (2022). Understanding job loss among journalists. In T. Marjoribanks, L. Zion, P. O'Donnell & M. Sherwood (Eds.), *Journalists and Job Loss* (pp. 3–14). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429325588-1

Matheson, D. (2010). The watchdog's new bark: Changing forms of investigative reporting. In S. Allan (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to news and journalism* (pp. 80–92). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869468-14

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2023, July 18). *Propaganda hardpoints—Limitations of russian misinformation due to Atlantic Resolve*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/DZ6eMYW7Xwc

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2024a, April 29). *Who is Ryan McBeth?* YouTube. https://youtu.be/wa77grOkdoM

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2024b, July 20). *Who is End Wokeness?* YouTube. https://youtu.be/8zZeZFs5KLQ

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2024c, November 16). *Johnny Harris lied in his military spending video.* YouTube. https://youtu.be/km00ulLxieE

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2025, November). *This is the first year that AUSA considers me media.* [YouTube Post]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/post/Ugkx9S6HUHQTCKBWIYt29wRkPfn6xQAtkfaf

McBeth [Ryan McBeth], R. (2026, March). *News appearance in a few minutes. Gonna try this look you guys liked with the tie and the Patagonia vest.* [YouTube Post]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/post/Ugkx4Ty17MNcJXjANtl9TBUzXcodsM50RRsU

McChesney, R. W. (2012). Farewell to journalism? Time for a rethinking. *Journalism Studies*, *13*(5–6), 682–694. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2012.679868

McCleery, A. (2019, September 6). *Car manufacturer uses visit from Peter Dutton to spruik its products in cringeworthy ad—But customers say it's turned them OFF making a purchase.* https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7434559/Car-manufacturer-spruiks-visit-Peter-Dutton-customers-threaten-boycott.html

McClymont, K. (2024a, February 1). "You win, you run this city": Death threats force friendlyjordies to remove video. *Sydney Morning Herald.*

https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/you-win-you-run-this-city-death-threats-force-friendlyjordies-to-remove-video-20240201-p5f1pm.html

McClymont, K. (2024b, May 12). The ABC reporter, the underworld postman and the "sinister threats". *Sydney Morning Herald.* https://www.smh.com.au/national/the-abc-reporter-the-underworld-postman-and-the-sinister-threats-20240512-p5jcxf.html

McDowell-Naylor, D., Cushion, S., & Thomas, R. (2023). A typology of alternative online political media in the United Kingdom: A longitudinal content analysis (2015–2018). *Journalism*, *24*(1), 41–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211059585

McGrady, R., Zheng, K., Curran, R., Baumgartner, J., & Zuckerman, E. (2023). Dialing for videos: A Random sample of YouTube. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, *3*, 1–85. https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2023.022

McMullan, J. (2021). The great jump cut (r)evolution: A case for studying the evolution of vlogging production techniques. *First Monday*, *26*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v26i2.10547

McNair, B., Flew, T., Harrington, S., & Swift, A. (2017). *Politics, media and democracy in Australia: Public and producer perceptions of the political public sphere*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771311

@mcteags. (2023, December 8). *When I saw Joeri uploaded a video about CBDC I immediately clicked to watch it.* [Comment on "Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpu6G_UlSdM&lc=UgzYedlBomzGcClh8254AaABAg

Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance. (n.d.). *MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics*. https://www.meaa.org/meaa-media/code-of-ethics/

Mellado, C., & Hermida, A. (2022). A conceptual framework for journalistic identity on social media: How the personal and professional contribute to power and profit. *Digital Journalism*, *10*(2), 284–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1907203

Michalski [Punter's Politics], K. (2025a, May 6). *Why you'll never own a home | Punters Politics*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/rF7jqs1jOvw

Michalski [Punter's Politics], K. (2025b, July 31). *Stupidity or corruption? Australia gives away another $500 million*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/g_OFPfLwii4

Michalski [Punter's Politics], K. (2026a, February 19). *They tried to hide this report... so I read it. | Punters Politics*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/3-VDCx1f_N4

Michalski [Punter's Politics], K. (2026b, April 30). *"Influencer" spends $80,000. Proves lobbying works | Punters Politics*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Y4tPu21_KvQ

Michalski [Punter's Politics], K. (2026c, May 7). *The Karl Stefanovic debate reaction & why I won't do it again | Punters Politics*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/MJwHxAoUNKg

Mill, J. S. (1863). *On liberty*. Ticknor and Fields.

@m.junaidmahmood4209. (2023, May 26). *Your videos and the analysis have made me think differently on the clips shown on news reals.* [Comment on "Rapid Roundup 11 - Ukrainian Mortars, Trench-clearing Shotguns and Sanitized Storm Shadow Missiles"]. Ryan McBeth, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRvJjUCiUcY&lc=UgzW7xscXCwEoQ0IQx94AaABAg

Mohan, S., & Punathambekar, A. (2019). Localizing YouTube: Language, cultural regions, and digital platforms. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *22*(3), 317–333. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877918794681

Møller, L. A. (2022). Between personal and public interest: How algorithmic news recommendation reconciles with journalism as an ideology. *Digital Journalism*, *10*(10), 1794–1812. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2032782

Molyneux, L., & Nelson, J. L. (2024). "Let's not tank the reputation of this organization." How newsroom social media policies exacerbate journalism's labor crisis. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(9), 931–950. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2263797

Moody, L., Marsden, L., & Nguyen, B. (2021). *Consultations with young people to inform the eSafety Commissioner's engagement strategy for young people*. Young and Resilient Research Centre, Western Sydney University. https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/youth-engagement-and-online-safety

Morse, J. M. (2015). Analytic strategies and sample size. *Qualitative Health Research*, *25*(10), 1317–1318. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315602867

Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? *Social Research*, *66*(3), 745–758.

Munger, K., & Phillips, J. (2022). Right-wing YouTube: A supply and demand perspective. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *27*(1), 186–219. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220964767

Napoli, P. (2019). *Social media and the public interest: Media regulation in the disinformation age*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/napo18454

National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022 (Cth).

Nechushtai, E. (2018). Could digital platforms capture the media through infrastructure? *Journalism*, *19*(8), 1043–1058. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917725163

Ngai, Jonathan. (2022). *Evaluation across newspaper genres: Hard news stories, editorials and feature articles.* Taylor & Francis Group.

Nicholas [Tom Nicholas], T. (2021, March 12). *Johnny Harris: A story of YouTube propaganda*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Dum0bqWfiGw

Nicholas [Tom Nicholas], T. (2024, May 18). *I investigated why British cities keep going bankrupt*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/V0DKsMJl6Z8

Nicholas [Tom Nicholas], T. (2026, April 25). *Can Nationalisation Fix Britain's Trains?*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/X8m9kMaK4Ds

Nichols, S. (2024, April 26). Man wrongly identified as Bondi Junction attacker by Seven settles defamation case with the network. *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-26/man-wrongly-identified-bondi-junction-attacker-seven-settles/103772376

Nieborg, D. B., Duffy, B. E., & Poell, T. (2020). Studying platforms and cultural production: Methods, institutions, and practices. *Social Media + Society*, *6*(3), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120943273

NSW Parliament. (2021a). *Budget Estimates 2021-2022—Portfolio Committee No 5, 1 November 2021 (am)*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/xjFMGgY3iD8?t=459

NSW Parliament. (2021b). *Budget Estimates 2021-2022—Portfolio Committee No. 5—29 October 2021 (pm)*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/s2eOowlU_nA?t=3686

NSW Parliament. (2022). *Budget Estimates 2021-2022—Portfolio Committee No. 5—Deputy Premier—4 May 2022*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/-z-OMlZRguw?si=H-htaon0BlawhSMz&t=16230

O' Brien, A. (2019). *Women, inequality and media work*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429434815

Oh, C. (2015). Queering spectatorship in K-pop: The androgynous male dancing body and western female fandom. *Journal of Fandom Studies, 3*(1), 59–78. https://doi.org/10.1386/jfs.3.1.59_1

Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth).

Open Courts Act 2013 (Vic).

Oprea, C. (2023). *The effects of impartiality disclosure on brand objectives for no and multiple product endorsements*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-41364-4

Pande, R. (2011). Can informed voters enforce better governance? Experiments in low-income democracies. *Annual Review of Economics*, *3*(1), 215–237. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-061109-080154

Park, S., Fisher, C., & Picard, R. (2026a). Funding the news: Current business models. In T. Flew, A. Stepnik, & T. Koskie (Eds.), *Valuing News: Digital Platforms and Journalism Futures*. Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-95-2341-2

Park, S., Fisher, C., Fletcher, R., Tandoc, E., Dulleck, U., Fulton, J., Stepnik, A., & Yao, S. P. (2025a). Exploring responses to mainstream news among heavy and non-news users: From high-effort pragmatic scepticism to low effort cynical disengagement. *New Media & Society*, *27*(7), 4143–4163. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241234916

Park, S., Fisher, C., McGuinness, K., Lee, J. Y., Fujita, M., Haw, A., McCallum, K., & Nardi, G. (2025b). *Digital news report: Australia 2025*. News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. https://doi.org/10.60836/MD4E-K570

Park, S., Fisher, C., McGuinness, K., Lee, J. Y., McCallum, K., Cai, X., & Chatskin, M. (2024). *Digital news report: Australia 2024*. News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. https://doi.org/10.60836/FXCR-XQ72

Park, S., McGuinness, K., Lee, J. Y., Fulton, J., Fujita, M., Nolan, D., Fisher, C., & Nardi, G. (2026b). *Digital news report: Australia 2026*. News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra. https://doi.org/10.60836/RZWF-4J74

Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023 (Cth).

@paxundpeace9970. (2024, August 22). *Weekly updates are awesome* [Comment on 'Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more']. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgwvVzfvyi2OV5mVDa14AaABAg.A7RhtoogUhBA7SUFKLH4Ea

Peer, L., & Ksiazek, T. B. (2011). YouTube and the challenge to journalism: New standards for news videos online. *Journalism Studies*, *12*(1), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2010.511951

Peters, C., & Broersma, M. J. (2017). The rhetorical illusions of news. In C. Peters & M. J. Broersma (Eds.), *Rethinking journalism again: Societal role and public relevance in a digital age* (pp. 188–204). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315716244

Plaut, E. R. (2016). Enlightenment, the remix: Transparency as a DJ's trick of seeing everyone from nowhere. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *9*(2), 303–321. https://doi.org/10.1111/cccr.12107

Poell, T., Nieborg, D. B., & Duffy, B. E. (2022). *Platforms and cultural production*. Polity Press.

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (Cth).

Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Act 2023 (Cth).

Public Information Act 2010 (NT).

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 (WA).

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld).

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth).

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018 (SA).

Public Interest Disclosure Act (ACT).

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic).

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (NSW).

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth).

@ranig2848. (2023, July 18). *Fantastic video (and videos). Keep them coming! Thank you for fighting misinformation—With facts.* [Comment on "Propaganda Hardpoints - Limitations of Russian Misinformation Due to Atlantic Resolve"]. Ryan McBeth, YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZ6eMYW7Xwc&lc=UgwVeYLAW2RBw23BVON4AaABAg

Rawsthorne, S. (2022, November 24). Friendlyjordies taking 'indefinite hiatus' after arson attack. *Sydney Morning Herald*. https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/friendyjordies-taking-indefinite-hiatus-after-arson-attack-20221124-p5c0ws.html

Renouf v Federal Capital Press of Australia Pty Ltd (1977) 17 ACTR 35.

Repetto, L. (2018). Political budget cycles with informed voters: Evidence from Italy. *The Economic Journal*, *128*(616), 3320–3353. https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12570

Richardson, J. E. (2006). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rieder, B., Borra, E., Coromina, Ò., & Matamoros-Fernández, A. (2023). Making a living in the creator economy: A large-scale study of linking on YouTube. *Social Media + Society*, *9*(2), 1–20. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305123118062

Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld).

Right to Information Act 2009 (Tas).

Ritter, Z., & Holcomb, J. (2023). Beyond the 'trust' survey: Measuring media attitudes through observation. In R. Lawrence & P. Napoli, *News Quality in the Digital Age* (pp. 84–94). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003257998-8

Robertson, C. T., & Mourão, R. R. (2020). Faking alternative journalism? An analysis of self-presentations of "fake news" sites. *Digital Journalism*, *8*(8), 1011–1029. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1743193

Rodrigo-Ginés, F.-J., Carrillo-de-Albornoz, J., & Plaza, L. (2024). A systematic review on media bias detection: What is media bias, how it is expressed, and how to detect it. *Expert Systems with Applications*, *237*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2023.121641

Rolph, D., Vitins, M., Bannister, J., Joyce, D., Bosland, J., Gill, J., & Douglas, M. (2022). *Media law: Cases, materials and commentary* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Roslyng, M. M., & Blaagaard, B. B. (2023). The boy, who wanted broccoli: Alternative news and acts of citizenship within new mediascapes. *Digital Journalism*, *11*(5), 762–777. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.2013125

Ross Arguedas, A., Robertson, C. T., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. K. (2022). *Echo chambers, filter bubbles, and polarisation: A literature review*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://doi.org/10.60625/RISJ-ETXJ-7K60

Russell v Australian Broadcasting Corporation (No 3) [2023] FCA 1223.

Ryan, H. (2014). The half-hearted protection of journalists' sources: Judicial interpretation of Australia's shield laws. *Media and Arts Law Review*, *19*(4), 325–357.

Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws—General Law Reform) Bill 2008 (Cth).

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, *52*(4), 1893–1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

SBS. (2021). *SBS Code of Practice*. https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/sbs-code-of-practice/

Schapals, A. K. (2024). Peripheral actors and journalistic boundaries. In S. A. Eldridge, D. Cheruiyot, S. Banjac & J. Swart (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to digital journalism studies* (2nd ed., pp. 267–275). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003334774-32

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2022, September 23). *Money & Macro channel trailer*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/6IGIp8-kbgM

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2023a, December 8). *Why central banks are launching digital currencies*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Dpu6G_UlSdM

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2023b, December 8). *Yes. But, this is also something that central bankers have discussed as an advantage of a cbdc living alongside private and cash payment options* [Comment on "Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies"]. Money &

Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dpu6G_UlSdM&lc=Ugxpl2iRLcwlJXgS1gN4AaABAg.9y3_uXa2KJW9y3rDBT9LW1

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2024a). *Unique opportunity to join a central banking conference, in which I am a panellist, on January 11th.* [YouTube Post]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/post/UgkxLh4v0lCoVmDxMXz3flW3HFKq7TVmzz4Q

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2024b, August 22). *Minor correction, the graph at 9:27 is about net millionaire departures (not arrivals).* [Comment on "Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgzkGZnStN0N722SJFR4AaABAg

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2024c, August 22). *Still experimenting with a new format. But, not to worry, more in depth analyses will be back in September* [Comment on "Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgwvVzfvyi2OV5mVDa14AaABAg

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2025a, April 4). *Why Trump's tariff chaos actually makes sense.* YouTube. https://youtu.be/1ts5wJ6OfzA

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2025b, May 2). *I was wrong about Trump's tariff masterplan.* YouTube. https://youtu.be/QgE8Hp9hs4M

Schasfoort [Money & Macro], J. (2026, September 12). *Economist fact-checks Gary's Economics.* YouTube. https://youtu.be/BRcWIXMQze8

Schnell, C. (2016). Journalism and its professional challenges. In M. Dent, B. Swethaa, J.-L. Denis & T. Adams (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to the professions and professionalism* (pp. 371–384). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315779447-36

Schrijvers, E., Damstra, A., Askari, L., Hoogendoorn, K., & Bijleveld, C. (2026). *Media matters: towards new safeguards for their democratic functions*. Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-11327-6

Schudson, M. (2008). *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*. Polity Press.

Schudson, Michael. (2011). *The sociology of news* (2nd ed.). W.W. Norton & Co.

Schultz, J. (1998). *Reviving the fourth estate: Democracy, accountability and the media*. Cambridge University Press.

Scott, R. E. (2000). The limits of behavioral theories of law and social norms. *Virgina Law Review*, *86*(8), 1603–1647.

Senate Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism. (2018). *Future of Public Interest Journalism*. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Future_of_Public_Interest_Journalism/PublicInterestJournalism/Report

Serious Offenders Act 2018 (Vic).

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2017, April 4). *Boycott the mainstream media!*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/dUuzV3__smE

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2022a, January 17). *Friendlyjordies attacks Labor*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/8n7yjc867eE

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2022b, March 4). *The baddest MP: Dutton*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/aIGKCkS01EA

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2022c, March 15). *Fixated*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/f83qfSV16i4?si=xQGEdwlGZhLt9Za0&t=613

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2023a, April 6). *I didn't want to make this video*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Z_jx_zPjCUs

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2023b, August 4). *Paradise bombed*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/nSf3268tAbg

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2024, February 1). *Statement from friendlyjordies*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/PRqUVh29LGQ

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2025, October 27). *I wanna kill him so bad*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/RZBQe4RLdZ8

Shanks-Markovina [friendlyjordies], J. (2026, June 4). *The downfall of political commentary*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/bGBBbKS0fbY

Shanks-Markovina [IndependentAus], J. (2025, January 15). *Indy eye: Burning down the house with friendlyjordies*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/W6DiewrVYSs

Shapiro, I. (2014). Why democracies need a functional definition of journalism now more than ever. *Journalism Studies*, *15*(5), 555–565. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.882483

Sibthorpe, C. (2023, November 21). YouTuber friendlyjordies "under police protection" year after house fire. *Sydney Morning Herald.* https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/cctv-released-into-suspicious-fire-at-friendlyjordies-house-20231122-p5elug.html

Simons, M. (2022). This is not journalism. *Meanjin*, *81*(2), 66–85. https://doi.org/doi/10.3316/informit.523580824791738

Sinclair, J. (2009). Minorities, media, marketing and marginalization. *Global Media and Communication*, *5*(2), 177–196. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766509340969

Smyrnaios, N., & Baisnée, O. (2023). Critically understanding the platformization of the public sphere. *European Journal of Communication*, *38*(5), 435–445. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231189046

@sornponwichaidit4172. (2024, August 22). *I love this channel so much. It provides unbiased economic info, unlike other influencers who just throw out biased opinions to please their followers.* [Comment on "Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more"]. Money & Macro, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kIRWcwatnU&lc=UgzbqOWx6OOZZrSsh3p4AaABAg

Spautz v Williams [1983] 2 NSWLR 506, 540.

Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 (Cth).

Steensen, S., & Ahva, L. (2015). Theories of journalism in a digital age: An exploration and introduction. *Digital Journalism*, *3*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.927984

Steensen, S., Grøndahl Larsen, A. M., Hågvar, Y. B., & Fonn, B. K. (2019). What does digital journalism studies look like? *Digital Journalism*, *7*(3), 320–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1581071

Steensen, S., & Westlund, O. (2021). *What is digital journalism studies?* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429259555

Stephens, M. (2014). *Beyond news: The future of journalism*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/step15938

Sumiala, J. (2019). Agony at a distance: Investigating digital witnessing on YouTube. In T. Eberwein, M. Karmasin, F. Krotz & M. Rath (Eds.), *Responsibility and resistance: Ethics in mediatized worlds* (pp. 131–145). Springer Vieweg. in Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26212-9_8

Summary Offences Act 1953 (SA).

Summary Offences Act 2005 (Qld).

Supreme Court Act 1970 (NSW).

Sweet, M., Geia, L., Dudgeon, P., McCallum, K., Armstrong, R., Doggett, J., Coopes, A., Ward, M. J., Senior, T., & Ricketson, M. (2017). Outlining a model of social journalism for health. *Australian Journalism Review*, *39*(2), 91–106.

Szostak, R. (2015). Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary multimethod and mixed methods research. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & R. B. Johnson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of multimethod and mixed methods research inquiry* (pp. 128–143). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199933624.013.51

Tabani [Zaid Tabani], Z. (2026, June 22). *Trump loses in Iran, Zohran wins in New York | Freestyle the news*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/G3rl6ABLXEE

@Tahia213. (2021, July 12). *It sounds like the first time in years that we are watching a real investigation journalist doing an amazing job* [Comment on "Blood Water: the war for Australia's water"]. Friendlyjordies, YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=glgCA9WmqkI&lc=UgxNmovO5opHXKcClLB4AaABAg

Tanner, M. (2021, July 15). Tamed estate: Arrest of friendlyjordies producer attests to dangerous state of democracy. *Michael West Media*. www.michaelwest.com.au/tamed-estate-arrest-of-friendlyjordies-producer-attests-to-dangerous-state-of-democracy/

Tashakkori, A., Johnson, B., & Teddlie, C. (2021). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Taylor, D. (2026, February 18). Millionaire Gary Stevenson's dire warning for Australian property market losing the "fair go". *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-02-18/economist-gary-stevenson-warns-australia-losing-the-fair-go/106342536

Taylor [münecat], G. (2024, May 19). *I Debunked Evolutionary Psychology*. YouTube. https://youtu.be/31e0RcImReY

Tecucianu, D. (2014). The "language" of cinema: Film "grammar" and visual literacy. *International Journal of Communication Research*, *4*(3), 251–256.

Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (Cth).

The Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association. (2013). *Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice*. https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2019-10/rules/subscription-broadcast-television-codes-practice-2013

@thetargetlive. (2023, August 4). *This is REAL journalism, going to places of danger, telling stories of those who can not tell it themselves.* [Comment on 'Paradise Bombed']. Friendlyjordies, YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSf3268tAbg&lc=Ugx8sLfeODtbOao8Jsx4AaABAg

Thomas, R. J. (2018). Harm in Journalism. In P. Lee Plaisance (Ed.), *Communication and Media Ethics* (Vol. 26, pp. 215–234). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110466034-012

Thomson, T. J., & Bock, M. A. (2025). Designing the visual gateways into crime news: A comparison of YouTube thumbnails from journalists and non-journalists. *Journalism Practice*, *19*(8), 1797–1821. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2288921

Tindi, S., & Kwode, P. A. K. (2025). Surviving digital disruption: Ghanaian newspapers' response to digitalisation. *Journalism*. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849251355814

Tocqueville, A. (1848). *De la démocratie en Amérique* [Democracy in America]. Ligaran Éditions [2015].

Treasury Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Act 2021 (Cth).

Vernallis, C. (2013). *Unruly media: YouTube, music video, and the new digital cinema*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199766994.001.0001

Verstappen, M., & Opgenhaffen, M. (2024). Making it fit: How science news gets remediated for Facebook and Instagram. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(9), 1010–1028. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2023.2263799

Victoria Police Act 2013 (Vic).

V'landys v Australian Broadcasting Corporation [2023] FCAFC 80.

Walters, P. (2017). Beyond the inverted pyramid: Teaching the writing and all-formats coverage of planned and unplanned breaking news. *Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication*, *7*(2), 9–22.

Warner, M. (2002). *Publics and counterpublics*. Zone Books.

Wilding, D., Fray, P., Molitorisz, S., & McKewon, E. (2018). *The impact of digital platforms on news and journalistic content*. Centre for Media Transition, University of Technology Sydney.

Wilding, D., & Molitorisz, S. (2022). Improving news media oversight: Why Australia needs a cross-platform standards scheme. *Australian Journalism Review*, *44*(1), 19–38. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajr_00086_1

Witschge, T., Anderson, C., Domingo, D., & Hermida, A. (2019). Dealing with the mess (we made): Unraveling hybridity, normativity, and complexity in journalism studies. *Journalism*, *20*(5), 651–659. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918760669

YouTube. (n.d.-a). *Recommendations*. Retrieved 3 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/howyoutubeworks/recommendations/

YouTube. (n.d.-b). *Welcome to the YouTube Partner Program*. YouTube Creators. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/intl/en_us/creators/partner-program/

YouTube. (2026a). *Culture & Trends Report: 20th Birthday*. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/trends/report/tr25-20th-birthday/

YouTube. (2026b). *Global Culture & Trends Report*. Retrieved 4 March 2026, from https://www.youtube.com/trends/report/tr25-global-trends-report/

Zelizer, B. (2009). Journalism and the academy. In T. Hanitzsch & K. Wahl-Jorgensen (Eds.), *The handbook of journalism studies* (pp. 49–61). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203877685-10

Zelizer, B. (2019). Why journalism is about more than digital technology. *Digital Journalism*, *7*(3), 343–350. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1571932

Zelizer, Barbie. (2004). *Taking journalism seriously: News and the academy*. Sage.

Zion, L. (2022). Australian journalists: Adapting to redundancy over time. In T. Marjoribanks, L. Zion, P. O'Donnell & M. Sherwood (Eds.), *Journalists and job loss* (pp. 17–29). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429325588-2

Zion, L., Marjoribanks, T., & O'Donnell, P. (2022). Who is a journalist now? Recognising atypical journalism work in the digital media economy. *Media International Australia*, *192*(1), 98–114. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X221134207

Zollmann, F. (2019). Bringing propaganda back into news media studies. *Critical Sociology*, *45*(3), 329–345. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920517731134

Appendix A - Australian government inquiries/reports into media.

Report Name	Mentions public interest?	Discusses public interest?	Includes definition for public interest?	Mentions journalism?	Discusses journalism?	Includes definition for public interest journalism?	Includes definition for journalism?
Communications and media in Australia: How we access news February 2024	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Communications and media in Australia: Trends and developments in viewing and listening 2022–23 December 2023	N	N	N	N	N	N but includes PIJI definition	N
News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code - The Code's first year of operation December 2022	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Media diversity in Australia December 2021	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
A report to government on the adequacy of digital platforms' disinformation and news quality measures June 2021	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Treasury Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Bill 2020 Exposure Draft Explanatory Materials July 2020	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Digital Platforms Inquiry: Final Report June 2019	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Inquiry into the competitive neutrality of the national broadcasters September 2018	Y	Y	N but gives examples of public interest topics – social	Y	Y	N	N

			welfare & equity, p. 75				
Communications sector market study: final report April 2018	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Internet Competition Inquiry March 2018	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Report on Public Interest Journalism February 2018	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N though discusses definition issues pp. 2-6	N
Local content in regional Australia 2017 report May 2017	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Review of the Australian Communications and Media Authority: final report October 2016	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Digital disruption: what do governments need to do? June 2016	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Reconnecting the customer: estimation of benefits November 2015	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
The Australian internet security initiative: interviews with industry participants October 2015	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Five-year spectrum outlook 2015-19: the ACMA's spectrum demand analysis and strategic direction for the next five years September 2015	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Digital radio report July 2015	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Independent cost benefit analysis of broadband and review of regulation August 2014	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Broken Concepts—The Australian Communications Legislative Landscape Published Aug 2011, updated June 2013.	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N

Connected citizens—A regulatory strategy for the networked society and information economy June 2013	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Convergence Review May 2012	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Classification—Content Regulation and Convergent Media March 2012	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N
News Media Regulation (the Finkelstein Review) February 2012	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Enduring Concepts—Communications and media in Australia November 2011	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Digital Australians: expectations about media content in a converging media environment October 2011	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Draft children's television standards 2008 September 2008	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Survey of the community radio broadcasting sector 2002-03 August 2005	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Appendix B – Academic definitions of journalism

36 out of 148 have definitions. Works with definitions are highlighted in green.

Year	Author(s)	Title	Definitions of journalist, journalism or news? (plus notes)	#
2026	Erik Schrijvers, Alyt Damstra, Lana Askari, Koen Hoogendoorn, and Catrien Bijleveld	Media Matters: Towards New Safeguards for Their Democratic Functions	No	1
2026	Ryan J. Thomas, T. J. Thomson , Hannes Cools, Rebecca Venema , Oscar Toohey , Caroline Gardam , Edina Strikovic , Michelle Riedlinger & Jean Burgess	Expecting Humans, Encountering Machines: An Expectancy Violations Theory Approach to Generative AI in Journalism	No	**2**
2026	Floriane M.A. van Alphen, Christel W. van Eck, Hannes Cools, Anke Wonneberger & Christian Burgers	Reviving the Balance Norm? Navigating Tensions Between Objectivity and Advocacy in Journalism on Climate Solutions	No	**3**
2026	Diana Bossio & Jonathon Hutchinson	Taking Care Online: Reconceptualising Professional Wellbeing for Social Media Engagement in Journalism	Yes “News focused content was defined as content produced that referenced information or events occurring in Australia, that were timely and based on an identifiable news or	4

			information values or genres, such as politics, lifestyle, arts and culture or daily news reportage." (p. 8). It's unclear why the authors use the phrase "information values or genres".	
2026	Tomas Dodds, Rodrigo & Seth C. Lewis.	The AI turn in journalism: Disruption, adaptation, and democratic futures	No	5
2026	Jonathan Hendrickx and Michaël Opgenhaffen	Introduction Why We Edited This Volume and Why It Matters (Research Methods for Social Media Journalism)	No While it is not a definition for journalism, the authors define "social media journalism" as "journalism which has the use of one or several social media platforms at its core for the production, dissemination and/or consumption of news content" (p. 2).	6
2026	Marie Verstappen	"Let's make a TikTok": Unveiling the Role of Social Media Editors through Participant Observation Research	No	7
2026	Jonathan Hendrickx	"I Just WhatsApped You the Details": Three Recommendations for Observing Social Media Journalism in Practice	No	8
2026	Jorge Vazquez-Herrero & Maria-Cruz Negreira-Rey	TikTok Journalism: A Methodological Approach to Content Analysis on the Short-Video Platform	No "there are also difficulties in defining what constitutes a media outlet or a journalist on this platform" (p. 91).	9

2026	Lion Wedel & Anna-Theresa Mayer	Clustering Journalistic TikTok Videos: An Unsupervised Machine Learning Approach to Visual Content Analysis	No	10
2026	Margareta Salonen	Multimodality of Social Media Research in the Field of Journalism Studies: A Qualitative Perspective	No	11
2026	Diana Bossio	Can I See What You Mean By News? Methodologies for Understanding Young People's Changing News Identification and Consumption	No	12
2026	Valerie Hase	Advancing Cross- and Multi-Platform Research: Understanding Digital News Flows via Computational Methods	No	13
2026	Oscar Björkenfeldt	Self-Censorship in Journalism: The Role of Emotional, Professional, and Institutional Factors	No	14
2026	Cato Waterloos	Advancing Systematic Literature Reviews as a Method for Re-evaluating Core Concepts in Social Media Journalism	No "Indeed, the field of journalism studies has struggled with key concepts and their implications for empirical research" (p. 151).	15
2026	Gunhild Ring Olsen	Digitalization and Meaning in Journalistic Work (MJoW): The Increasing Importance of the Symbolic Dimension	No	16
2026	Vasco Moreira, Jonathan Hendrickx, Aljosha Schapals	"Talk to Me as a Friend!": How Teenagers Prefer Their Newsfluencers on Social Media	No	17

2026	Jonathan Ilan	“What the Heck Is Going on in the Group!”: Challenging Journalistic Authority by PseudoProfessional WhatsApp News Groups	No Focus on journalism boundaries.	18
2026	Terry Flew	News, Consumers and Citizens	No	19
2026	Sora Park, Caroline Fisher, and Robert Picard	Funding the News: Current Business Models	No	20
2026	Victor Pickard	Taking Journalism Out of the Market: Long-Term Reforms for the News Media We Need	No	21
2026	Timothy Koskie and Derek Wilding	Subsidising the Value of News	No Authors say, “Journalism is notoriously difficult to define” (p. 116).	22
2026	Philip M. Napoli and Sofia Bliss-Carrascosa	The News Media and Philanthropy	No	23
2026	James Meese, Diana Bossio, and Andrea Carson	Compelling Negotiations? News Media Bargaining Codes as Regulatory Instruments	No	24
2026	Agata Stepnik, Caroline Fisher, and Aljosha Karim Schapals	Reflection, Contemplation, Speculation: Stakeholder Perspectives on the Sustainability of News	No	25
2026	Tim Dwyer	The Focus on Competition Law and Epistemic Gaps in Contemporary Media Regulatory Discourses	No	26

2026	Merja Myllylahti	Mapping How Generative AI May Determine the Value of News in Fragmented and Fiercely Competitive Media Markets	No	27
2026	Mathias-Felipe de-Lima-Santos	Innovating Against the Odds: How Global South Newsrooms Adapt to AI and Digital Transformation	No	28
2026	Aljosha Karim Schapals and Colin Porlezza	AI in Journalism: An Industry and Profession at a Crossroads	No	29
2026	Anya Schiffrin and Haaris Mateen	How to Calculate What News is Worth to AI	No	30
2026	Rhianna Patrick et al.	Unlearning journalism through decolonising, Indigenous approaches	No	31
2025	Timothy Koskie	Invisible journalists and dominant algorithms: AI-generated news and its implications for Australian media pluralism	No.	32
2025	Edward Hurcombe	Conceptualising the “Newsfluencer”: Intersecting Trajectories in Online Content Creation and Platformatised Journalism	Yes. “news content is broadly defined as content that reports or comments on current events and topics, but which is not necessarily professional journalism” (p. 1524). No definition for “professional journalism”.	33
2025	Zicheng Cheng, Lana Medina , Timilehin Durotoye & Monica Chadha	News on TikTok Through the Lens of Quality Journalism: How TikTok Users Perceive News Values, Content, and Engagement	No	34

2025	Luise Anter	How social media affordances shape journalistic content production: A stimulus-based interview study on journalists' perceptions	No	35
2025	Patrick Jackson & Ben Stubbs	Practical guidelines for immersive journalism production	No. "Immersive journalism is defined by Gynnild et al. as 'the use of immersive technologies, like 360-degree video, virtual reality, augmented reality [and] mixed reality in journalistic storytelling'" (p. 78).	36
2025	Jonathan Hendrickx & Michaël Opgenhaffen (eds)	Research Methods for Social Media Journalism	No	37
2025	Martin Hirst	There's No Good News: Journalism, Crisis, and the Philosophy of Praxis	No	38
2024	Ryan Stanton and Mark R Johnson	"You Can't Work for Somebody Who Doesn't Exist": The Decline of Games Journalism and the Rise of Independent Gaming News	No	39
2024	Xiufang (Leah) Li and Alexandra Wake	Diplomacy, Propaganda, and Journalism in the Digital Landscape	No	40
2024	Aljosha Schapals	Peripheral Actors and Journalistic Boundaries	No	41
2024	Rubén Arnoldo González & Martín Echeverría	What is Professional Journalism? Conceptual Integration and Empirical Refinement	Yes "it is possible to define an ideal type of professional journalist as a properly trained individual who produces news stories, guided by the expectations of a specific societal function and, hence, with the freedom to perform his or her duties autonomously, according to a set of ethical and practical standards shared by his or her peers" (p. 1487).	42

2024	Jonathan Hendrickx & Michaël Opgenhaffen	Introduction: Understanding Social Media Journalism	No There is a definition of social media journalism that doesn't say what journalism is (p. 926).	43
2024	Park et al.	Exploring responses to mainstream news among heavy and non-news users: From high-effort pragmatic scepticism to low effort cynical disengagement	Yes Somewhat circular definition News in this study "refers to news produced by the mainstream news media, not by alternative news and information sources" (p. 6).	44
2024	Degen, M., Olgemöller, M. & Zabel C.	Quality Journalism in Social Media – What We Know and Where We Need to Dig Deeper	Yes Circular definition "We understand journalism as any form of professional journalism within institutionalized settings, irrespective of journalistic beat (Mellado et al. 2021) and employment type, including freelance journalists (Salamon 2020)." P. 403 Authors seem to misunderstand Harcup & O'Neils news values (p. 402).	45
2024	Leon Barkho et al.	Conceptualizing and Understanding Journalism	Yes However it is a bit vague. "That leaves us with the institutional approach to journalism …" (p. 5).	46
2024	Sara Ödmark & Jonas Nicolaï	Between Headlines and Punchlines: Journalistic Role Performance in Western News Satire	No Field theory, boundary / professionalism, "journalistic roles".	47
2024	Charis Papaevangelou	Funding Intermediaries: Google and Facebook's Strategy to Capture Journalism	No	48

2024	Kathryn Hayes	The Networked Newsroom: Navigating New Boundaries of Work	No	49
2024	Lisa Bradley and Emma Heywood	Journalism as the fourth emergency service	Yes Investigative journalism (p. 162).	50
2024	Sofya Glazunova & Aljosha Schapals.	Interlopers by choice, or interlopers by circumstance? Alexey Navalny and alternative journalistic projects in contemporary autocratic Russia	No Claim is made that someone is not a journalist if they don't go through journalism socialisation (p. 4). Also, "in authoritarian contexts such as Russia's, the boundaries of what counts as 'journalism' in the country are largely determined by political elites" (p. 5).	51
2023	T. J. Thomson & Mary Angela Bock	Designing the Visual Gateways into Crime News: A Comparison of Youtube Thumbnails from Journalists and Non-Journalists	No Sample selected by self-identification as journalist by YouTube channels	52
2023	Axel Bruns	From "the" public sphere to a network of publics: towards an empirically founded model of contemporary public communication spaces	No Interesting perspective of public sphere	53
2023	Jonathan Hendrickx	The Rise of Social Journalism: An Explorative Case Study of a Youth-oriented Instagram News Account	No	54
2023	Jonathan Hendrickx	From Newspapers to TikTok: Social Media Journalism as the Fourth Wave of News Production, Diffusion and Consumption	No Has a definition for social media journalism that doesn't define journalism, (p 230).	55
2023	Sora Park, Jee Young Lee, Tanya Notley & Michael Dezuanni	Exploring the relationship between media literacy, online interaction, and civic engagement	No	56
2023	José Sixto-García, Ana Isabel Rodríguez-Vázquez & Xosé López-García	News Sharing Using Self-destructive Content in Digital Native Media from an International Perspective	No	57

2023	Sora Park and Jee Young Lee	Incidental News Exposure on Facebook and Its Relation to Trust in News	No	58
2023	Sora Park et al.	Local news and audiences' wellbeing: the roles of motivation, satisfaction, and trust	No	59
2023	Harcup	All the news that's fit to report? News values and the "free press" (Book chapter)	No Discusses news values	60
2023	Shangyuan Wu	Assessing the growth of data journalism start-ups as alternative media and their roles in "flawed democracies"	Yes "Data journalism is characterized by the use of datasets as sources, the processing and analysis of data, and the creation of visualizations to explain findings (Coddington, 2015; Felle, 2016)" (p. 3). Alternative media "has been defined as having "counter-hegemonic content and news values" and is usually positioned to challenge legacy media (Holt et al., 2019, p. 860). Research on the media's alternativeness has centred on five dimensions, namely organizational structure, form, processes, content, and motive" (p. 3).	61
2023	Michael Koliska, Erin Moroney & David Beavers	Trust Through Relationships in Journalism	Yes Definition of journalist: "Journalists are such experts who fulfill the function in democratic societies of providing information and knowledge for public deliberation. Journalists gather, filter and select information to offer their audiences a sense of orientation in an increasingly complex world" (p .3). Discusses definitions of "trust" and "mutuality", and "relational trust".	62
2023	Pascal Schneiders	News from the User's Perspective: With Naivety to Validity	Yes	63

			Summarises news in the literature as: “News… 1. comes from professional journalists [originators], 2. refers to current events, is unique or unusual, and of social relevance [content], 3. is of concise, clear form and fact-based and objective language [style], 4. is transmitted via mass media [channel], and 5. provides reliable information and contributes to opinion-forming and participation in the public interest [function]” (p. 4). Goes on to update and add “dedifferentiation” (pp. 4+).	
2023	Stephanie Edgerly	Avoiding News is Hard Work, or is it? A Closer Look at the Work of News Avoidance among Frequent and Infrequent Consumers of News	No Study is about news avoidance. It allowed respondents to go with their own definition of news	64
2023	Chrisanthi Giotis & Christopher Hall	Better Foreign Correspondence Starts at Home: Changing Practice Through Diasporic Knowledge	No Professionalism	65
2023	Peter Greste	Defining journalism: How a new approach to a definition could revolutionize media freedom	Yes The definition proposed by the Alliance for Journalists’ Freedom (p. 33).	66
2023	Mette Marie Roslyng & Bolette B. Blaagaard	The Boy, Who Wanted Broccoli: Alternative News and Acts of Citizenship within New Mediascapes	No	67
2023	Zacc Ritter & Jesse Holcomb	Beyond the "trust" survey: Measuring media attitudes through observation	No	68
2023	Desiree Steppat, Laia Castro & Frank Esser	What News Users Perceive as ‘Alternative Media’ Varies between Countries: How Media Fragmentation and Polarization Matter	No Alternative news media vs mainstream media. Definition for “alternative news media” is given (p. 744).	69

2022	Claudia Mellado & Alfred Hermida	A Conceptual Framework for Journalistic Identity on Social Media: How the Personal and Professional Contribute to Power and Profit	No Sociological perspective (field theory, professionalism)	70
2022	Rebecca Ananian-Welsh	Who is a Journalist? A Critical Analysis of Australian Statutory Definitions	Yes	71
2022	Ed Hurcombe	Social News: How Born-Digital Outlets Transformed Journalism	No	72
2022	Lynge Møller	Between personal and public interest: How algorithmic news recommendation reconciles with journalism as an ideology	Yes (p. 1796).	73
2022	Stephen Reese	The Institution of Journalism: Conceptualizing the Press in a Hybrid Media System	Yes News, journalism, press, (p. 254).	74
2022	Shin & Miller	A Review of the Participant Observation Method in Journalism: Designing and Reporting	No Sociological, field theory, professionalism	75
2022	Lawrie Zion Timothy Marjoribanks Penny O'Donnell	Who is a journalist now? Recognising atypical journalism work in the digital media economy	No There is a lot of discussion about the difficulty in defining journalist and journalism. "In essence, attempts to provide a precise definition of who is a journalist are problematic in a societal and workplace context that is contested and in flux" (p. 12)	76
2022	Willem Buyens & Peter Van Aelst	Alternative Media, Alternative Voices? A Quantitative Analysis of Actor Diversity in Alternative and Mainstream News Outlets	No "Alternative news media as news outlets that proclaim or are perceived to be corrective, opposing the perceived dominant mainstream media in a given system" (p. 340).	77
2022	David Ryfe	Actor-Network Theory and Digital Journalism	No Socio-technical perspective.	78

2022	Banjac	An Intersectional Approach to Exploring Audience Expectations of Journalism	No	79
2022	Caroline Fisher, David Nolan, Kieran McGuinness and Sora Park	Australian regional journalists' role perceptions at a time of upheaval	Yes "The term 'journalist' refers to traditional conceptions of those working in news reporting along with new positions in digital news outlets. Journalists in this study include: Managing editors; Editors/Senior editors/Chiefs of Staff; Sub-editors; Producers; Reporters; Digital reporters/editors; Social media producers; Trainees/cadet; and Others" (p. 6).	80
2022	Folker Hanusch & Kim Löhmann	Dimensions of Peripherality in Journalism: A Typology for Studying New Actors in the Journalistic Field	No	81
2022	Irene Costera Meijer	What is Valuable Journalism? Three Key Experiences and Their Challenges for Journalism Scholars and Practitioners	Yes Discusses definition of "user experience". "Valuable Journalism can be characterized as a meaningful, enlightening, surprising, empowering, comforting or reassuring experience which optimizes news enjoyment and civic empowerment and can be condensed into three key experiences: "Getting recognition," "Learning something new" and "Increasing mutual understanding." It satisfies fundamental human needs of autonomy, inspiration, sense of belonging, competence and social relatedness" (p. 241).	82
2022	Joëlle Swart, Tim Groot Kormelink, Irene Costera Meijer & Marcel Broersma	Advancing a Radical Audience Turn in Journalism. Fundamental Dilemmas for Journalism Studies	No	83
2022	Marju Himma-Kadakas & Raul Ferrer-Conill	Is news engagement worthwhile? Studying young audiences' engagement with YouTuber-like news content	No Important section on p. 156: "News like YouTubers do it"	84

2021	Sora Park, Yoonmo Sang, Jaemin Jung & Natalie Jomini Stroud	News Engagement: The Roles of Technological Affordance, Emotion, and Social Endorsement	No. Lots of discussion of "engagement" but not of "news" or "journalism".	85
2021	Ferrer-Conill et al.	The Visual Boundaries of Journalism: Native Advertising and the Convergence of Editorial and Commercial Content	No	86
2021	Dennis Lichtenstein, Martin R. Herbers & Halina Bause	Journalistic YouTubers and Their Role Orientations, Strategies, and Professionalization Tendencies	No Doesn't give their own definition, nor explicitly state which definition/ understanding they adopt. Though there is a great summary of other people's definitions/conceptualisations of journalism (pp. 1105-1106).	87
2021	Mario Haim, Michael Karlsson, Raul Ferrer-Conill, Aske Kammer, Dag Elgesem & Helle Sjøvaag	You Should Read This Study! It Investigates Scandinavian Social Media Logics ☝	No	88
2021	Tim Dwyer, Derek Wilding, & Tim Koskie	Media concentration and deteriorating conditions for investigative journalism	No	89
2021	Jonathan Hendrickx and Heritiana Ranaivoson	Why and how higher media concentration equals lower news diversity The Mediahuis case	Yes "'news', we mean pieces of information created for an intended target audience with the prime objective of informing it as objectively as possible on current affairs in one specific field" (p. 2803).	90
2021	Jelle Mast and Martina Temmerman	What's (The) News? Reassessing "News Values" as a Concept and Methodology in the Digital Age	No "A more specific notion of "the news" grew entangled with journalism, though, as the production and dissemination of recent public information through the generic form of "news stories" (Rantanen 2009) became the sole province of	91

			specialized practitioners adhering to a set of professional values and routines" (p. 689-690).	
2021	Diana Bossio	Journalists on Instagram: Presenting Professional Identity and Role on Image-focused Social Media	Yes "A professional journalist was defined as person employed at a media organisation to report on general news events or a specific news genre" (p. 1776).	92
2021	Kim Andersen, Adam Shehata & Dennis Andersson	Alternative News Orientation and Trust in Mainstream Media: A Longitudinal Audience Perspective	No Has definition for alternative media (p. 835).	93
2021	Stephen Cushion, Declan McDowell-Naylor & Richard Thomas	Why National Media Systems Matter: A Longitudinal Analysis of How UK Left-Wing and Right-Wing Alternative Media Critique Mainstream Media (2015–2018)	No.	94
2020	Laura Ahva and Steen Steensen	Journalism Theory	No Summarises theoretical perspectives on journalism.	95
2020	Andrea Carson	Investigative journalism, democracy and the digital age	Yes Investigative journalism.	96
2020	Sora Park, Caroline Fisher, Terry Flew & Uwe Dulleck	Global Mistrust in News: The Impact of Social Media on Trust	No	97
2020	Tony Harcup	What's the Point of News?: A Study in Ethical Journalism	No "News is the very essence of journalism: its heartbeat." Discusses definitions a lot without giving one (p. 1).	98
2020	Deuze, Mark ; Witschge, Tamara	Beyond journalism	No "Rather than defining journalism, here we tell stones by those who consider themselves journalists and/or are defined as such by others" (p. 24).	99

2020	Seong Jae Min	What the Twenty-First Century Engaged Journalism can Learn from the Twentieth Century Public Journalism	No	100
2020	Ferrer-Conill et al.	Playful approaches to news engagement	No	101
2020	Gregory P. Perreault and Patrick Ferrucci	What Is Digital Journalism? Defining the Practice and Role of the Digital Journalist	Yes "For the purposes of recruitment, researchers defined journalists as 'people who work for a journalistic medium as their main job' and 'carry out journalistic activities' such as publishing on current, relevant topics" (p.1303).	102
2020	Paul Clemens Murschetz	State Aid for Independent News Journalism in the Public Interest? A Critical Debate of Government Funding Models and Principles, the Market Failure Paradigm, and Policy Efficacy	No. Though author mentions various journalistic elements more or less in passing. For example, "journalistic principles" (p. 732). "Watchdog function" (p. 724). States "the notion of public interest itself is so protean a concept as to defy any quick definition or measurement. Nor even academia has come to an agreed definition" (p. 723).	103
2019	Frank Esser & Christopher Neuberger	Realizing the democratic functions of journalism in the digital age: New alliances and a return to old values	No	104
2019	Linda Kenix	Alternative media and journalistic boundary work	No	105
2019	Mark Deuze	What Journalism Is (Not)	No	106
2019	Tamara Witschge et al.	Dealing with the mess (we made): Unraveling hybridity, normativity, and complexity in journalism studies	No "Quite simply, we are advocating for understanding journalism (and life!) as made up of inconsistencies" (p. 656).	107

2019	Barbie Zelizer	Why Journalism Is About More Than Digital Technology	Yes “Journalism’s raison d’etre: the ability to independently cull and develop new and original information” (p. 349). “Digital journalism takes its meaning from both practice and rhetoric. Its practice as newsmaking embodies a set of expectations, practices, capabilities and limitations relative to those associated with pre-digital and non-digital forms, reflecting a difference of degree rather than kind. Its rhetoric heralds the hopes and anxieties associated with sustaining the journalistic enterprise as worthwhile. With the digital comprising the figure to journalism’s ground, digital journalism constitutes the most recent of many conduits over time that have allowed us to imagine optimum links between journalism and its publics” (p. 349).	108
2019	Andrew Duffy & Peng Hwa Ang	Digital Journalism: Defined, Refined, or Re-defined	No. Though there is a definition for “digital journalism” that doesn’t say what journalism is. “We therefore define digital journalism as the way in which journalism embodies the philosophies, norms, practices, values and attitudes of digitisation as they relate to society. These include the efficiency of control, storage, retrieval, accessibility and transmission of data; inclusivity, interactivity and collaboration in the propagation of information and opinion; flexibility and innovation in presenting news stories; and state, institutional and individual ownership of data and its implications for privacy and transparency” (p. 382).	109

2019	Rhianne Jones & Bronwyn Jones	Atomising the News: The (In)Flexibility of Structured Journalism	No	110
2019	Christopher Buschow	Why Do Digital Native News Media Fail? An Investigation of Failure in the Early Start-Up Phase	No "Digital-born news media, digital native news media, news/journalism start-ups" [...] "An established definition states that these outlets are built around a digital presence, have no formal affiliation to any legacy news organization, and seek to be recognized as journalistic by their peers (Bruno & Nielsen, 2012; Deuze & Witschge, 2020; Powers & Zambrano, 2016)" (p. 52).	111
2019	Katherine M. Engelke	Online Participatory Journalism: A Systematic Literature Review	No "Three stages of the professional news production process: (1) formation; (2) dissemination; and (3) interpretation of news" (p. 32). "Participatory journalism is understood here as audience participation in the news production process within professional journalistic contexts" (p. 31).	112
2019	Scott Eldridge	Where Do We Draw the Line? Interlopers, (Ant)agonists, and an Unbounded Journalistic Field	No	113
2019	Monika Djerf-Pierre, Mia Lindgren and Mikayla Alexis Budinski	The Role of Journalism on YouTube: Audience Engagement with 'Superbug' Reporting	No "These classic and enduring functions and values of journalism as an institution include its role as disseminator of information of common interest, acting as a watchdog against the powerful, and stimulating and hosting public deliberation on matters of importance (Braun & Gillespie, 2011; Couldry, 2017; Meyer & Carey, 2014; Peters & Broersma, 2017; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015; Wolfgang, 2018)" (p. 236).	114

2019	Steen Steensen, Anna M. Grøndahl Larsen, Yngve Benestad Hågvar & Birgitte Kjos Fonn	What Does Digital Journalism Studies Look Like?	No Discussion of digital journalism studies. “59 different theories in the 140 abstracts” p. 330	115
2019	Jean Burgess & Edward Hurcombe	Digital Journalism as Symptom, Response, and Agent of Change in the Platformed Media Environment	Yes “We propose to define digital journalism as Those practices of newsgathering, reporting, textual production and ancillary communication that reflect, respond to, and shape the social, cultural and economic logics of the constantly changing digital media environment” (p. 360).	116
2019	Hanitzsh et al. (editors).	Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe	Yes “Professional journalists, broadly defined as those who have at least some editorial responsibility for the content they produce” and earn at least half of their income from “paid labor for news media” (p. 51). Journalism is defined as “a discursive social institution that spawns a kaleidoscope of journalistic cultures, which are manifested as products of local societal and professional contexts” (p. 16). Journalists included in the research were found by going to news media organisations and choosing a journalist within those organisations (p. 51).	117
2019	Florian Zollmann	Bringing Propaganda Back into News Media Studies	No	118
2019	Kristoffer Holt, Tine Ustad Figenschou & Lena Frischlich	Key dimensions of alternative news media	No	119

			Though there are definitions for mainstream media and alternative media	
2018	Mark Deuze & Tamara Witschge	Beyond journalism: Theorizing the transformation of journalism	No	120
2018	Seth C. Lewis and Logan Molyneux	A Decade of Research on Social Media and Journalism: Assumptions, Blind Spots, and a Way Forward	No Sociological, professionalism perspective.	121
2018	Avery E. Holton and Valerie Belair-Gagnon	Strangers to the Game? Interlopers, Intralopers, and Shifting News Production	No	122
2018	Michael Buozis & Brian Creech	Reading News as Narrative	No	123
2018	J. David Wolfgang	How commenters use online forums as spaces for journalism's boundary work	No Good discussion of boundary work	124
2018	Martin Hirst	Navigating Social Journalism: A handbook for media literacy and citizen journalism	Yes "The practice of journalism, broadly defined as the production, distribution and consumption of news and news-like information" (p. 7).	125
2018	Katie Artemas, Tim P. Vos & Margaret Duff	Journalism Hits a Wall	No	126
2017	Couldry, N.	Reconstructing journalism's public rationale. In C. Peters & M. Broersma (Eds.), Rethinking journalism again: Societal role and public relevance in a digital age	Yes Journalism performs democratic functions, starting p. 27. "By 'journalism' I mean for this purpose the institutionalized production of facts, information and reference points of common interest for public circulation" (p. 21).	127
2017	Asmaa Malik and Ivor Shapiro	What's digital? What's journalism?	Yes "Journalism comprises the activities involved in an independent pursuit of, or commentary upon, accurate	128

			information about current or recent events and its original presentation for public edification" (p. 16).	
2017	Tony Harcup & Deirdre O'Neill	What is News? News values revisited (again)	Yes "News stories must generally satisfy…" (p. 1482).	129
2017	Jane Johnston & Anne Wallace	Who is a Journalist? Changing legal definitions in a de-territorialised media space	No Though it is a good discussion of legal definitions of journalism-related terms.	130
2016	Christiane Schnell	Journalism and its professional challenges	No	131
2014	Stephens	Beyond News: the future of journalism	Yes "News can be defined as new information about a subject of some public interest that is shared with some portion of the public" (p. xii). "Journalism is the activity of collecting, presenting, interpreting, or commenting upon the news for some portion of the public" (p. xiii).	132
2014	Ivor Shapiro	Why democracies need a Functional Definition of Journalism now more than ever	Yes. Great discussion of definitions of journalism. "Journalism comprises the activities involved in an independent pursuit of accurate information about current or recent events and its original presentation for public edification" (p. 561).	133
2013	Steven Maras	Objectivity in Journalism	No	134
2012	Homero Gil de Zúñiga & Amber Hinsley	The Press Versus the Public What is "good journalism?"	Yes "We have purposively used core features of good journalism that are consistent across diverse journalism studies" (p.	135

			928). "'Good journalism' (i.e., getting information to the public quickly, being watchdogs for the public, acting with objectivity, and helping people through civic journalism endeavors)" (p. 928).	
2012	Robert W. McChesney	FAREWELL TO JOURNALISM? Time for a rethinking	No However, the author writes: "There is considerable consensus in democratic theory and among journalism scholars (see Christians et al., 2009) about what a healthy journalism should entail" (p. 682).	136
2011	Michael Schudson	The sociology of news	Yes (p. 3).	137
2011	Limor Peer & Thomas B. Ksiazek	YOUTUBE AND THE CHALLENGE TO JOURNALISM New standards for news videos online	Yes News is thought to be the work of "journalists". "The work of journalists (i.e., news production) and standardized their output (i.e., news product)" (p. 46).	138
2011	Yochai Benkler	A Free Irresponsible Press: Wikileaks and the Battle over the Soul of the Networked Fourth Estate	No	139
2011	Joshua Braun & Tarleton Gillespie	Hosting the public discourse, hosting the public: When online news and social media converge	No However, the authors write, "Chief among the principles on which the authority of journalism rests is the claim that the press advocates for the public, serving as its voice in a mass-mediated society" (p. 385).	140
2010	Wolfgang Donsbach	Journalists and their professional identities	No	141
2010	Michael Davis	Why Journalism Is a Profession	Yes "Journalists belong to an occupation that gathers, analyzes, and reports the news, all in service to what the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics calls 'providing a fair and comprehensive account of [recent] events and issues'" (p. 11).	142

2009	Clifford Christians et al.	Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies	Yes, and more. “We see journalism, as James Carey noted, as a set of practices that “are justified in terms of the social consequences they engender, namely, the constitution of a democratic social order” (p. 9).	143
2009	Barbie Zelizer	Journalism and the Academy	No	144
2009	Donald Matheson	The Watchdog’s New Bark: Changing Forms of Investigative Reporting	No	145
2008	Justin Lewis , Andrew Williams & Bob Franklin	A COMPROMISED FOURTH ESTATE? UK news journalism, public relations and news sources	No	146
2005	Deuze, M.	What is journalism?: Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered	Yes Journalism as ideology: “The concepts, values and elements said to be part of journalisms’ ideology in the available literature can be categorized into five ideal-typical traits or values” (p. 446).	147
2004	Zelizer, B.	Taking journalism seriously : News and the academy	Yes Chapter 2 is called “Defining Journalism”. Gives details on five different ways of defining journalism: as a profession, as an institution, as a text, as people, as a set of practices.	148

Appendix C – Statute content analysis results

#	Legislation	Definition? (definitions highlighted)	Explicit journalist defences, privileges, or exemptions	Specific role of journalists in the act	Core of understanding	Key themes in understanding (highlighted = democratic function)
1	Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 (Cth)	N	N	N	Activity-based (see s 8 (c))	Accuracy, Objectivity. Informing the public
2	Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
3	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
4	Australian Border Force Act 2015 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
5	Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth)	1. Journalist S 202(5) 2. News or current affairs program Schedule 4, Part 1, s 2. 3. Local news program S 44AA (7)	Shield Law S 202 (4)	N	**1:** activity-based (s 202 (5)) and 2: content based. 3: content based	Journalist: Profession Informing the public News or current affairs program: Informing the public. Contributing to public sphere deliberation Local news program: Informing the public

6	Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)	Core news & Covered news S 52A	Media organisation can register for NMBC S 52F (1)	N	**Two different** content-based understandings of journalism	Core news: Informing the public on public interest issues Contributing to public sphere deliberation Covered news: Informing the public
7	Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)	N	Fair dealing for reporting news S 42 (1)(b); s 103B(1)(b)	N	Content-based	Informing the public
8	Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)	Journalist S 1317AAD (3)	N	Recipients of whistleblower information S 1317AAD (1)(f)(ii)	Person-based	Profession Business Occupation
9	Court Information Act 2010 (NSW)	News media organisation S 10 (5)	Special access to information S 10	N	Organisation-based	Informing the public Business
10	Court Security Act 2013 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
11	Court Security Act 2017 (Tas)	Journalist S 3	Specifies journalist activities around court S 8 (2)	N	Activity-based	Profession Ethical considerations Informing the public
12	Court Security Act 2005 (NSW)	Journalist S 4 (1)	Specifies journalist activities around court S 6 (2); s 9 (d)	N	Activity-based	Profession Informing the public
13	Court Security Act 1980 (Vic)	News media organisation S 2 (1)	Specifies journalist activities around court S 4A (3)(a); s 4C (3)(a)	N	Organisation-based Definition same as Open Courts Act 2013 (Vic)	Business Informing the public

14	Court Security Act 1998 (NT)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
15	Court Suppression and Non-publication Orders Act 2010 (NSW)	News media organisation S 3	Entitled to apply for court reviews S 13 (2)(d)	N	Organisation-based	Informing the public Business
16	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)	Journalism S 465F (3) Media organisation s 465F (3)	N	N	Activity-based Person-based	Informing the public X2 Contributing to public sphere deliberation X2
17	Crimes Act 1914 (Cth)	N	N	N Journalists as targets of account takeover warrants S 3ZZUP (2)(d)	Person-based S 3ZZUP (d)(dc)(i)	Profession
18	Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)	N	N	N	Content-based s 91FB (2)(c)	Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues
19	Crimes Act 1900 (ACT)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
20	Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld)	Y Journalist S 205 C	Y Shield law S 205 D	N	Activity-based	Informing the public about public interest issues Regularity Ethical considerations
21	Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
22	Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT)	N	Y Journalistic purposes special defence S 276H (4)(b)	N	Content based	None

23	Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA)	Media activity purposes S 221BD (1)	Special defence S 221BD (3)(c)(i)	N	Activity based [if post/boast bill passes change to] Two different activity-based understandings and one organisation-based understanding	Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation
24	Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)	Journalistic capacity Dictionary, p. 553	1. Special defence for "journalistic purposes" s 80.2H (9)(b); s 80.2HA (9)(b) 2. Special exemption s 80.2J (5)(c); s 80.2JA (5)(c); s 3. Special defence 80.2M (3)(b) 4. Special defence: making commentary in the public interest S 80.2 JA (6); s 80.2J (6) 5. Special exemption s 119.2 (3)(f) 6. Special defence S 122.5 (6)(a) 7. Special defences S 474.37 (1)(e); s 474.37 (2)(e); s 474.45D (1)(e);	N	1. Activity based 2. Content based 3. Activity based 4. Content based 5. Person based 6. Activity based 7. Content based	1. Occupation Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Professional 2. Occupation Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Professional 3. Occupation Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Professional 4. Contributing to public sphere deliberation 5. Profession Occupation 6. Business Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues

			Special exemptions, s 474.46 (2); s 474.47 (2)			Contributing to public sphere deliberation 7. Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Occupation Profession
25	Criminal Code Act 1924 (Tas)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	
26	Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	
27	Court Procedures Act 2004 (ACT)	N	Privilege of being able to attend criminal proceedings involving a child s 72(jI	N	Activity-based	Occupation Informing the public
28	Criminal Procedure Rules 2005 (WA) [Subsidiary Legislation]	Media Organisation S 51 (1A)	Able to apply to access court documents S 51 (2A)(i)	N	Activity-based	Informing the public
29	Civil Law (Wrongs) Act 2002 (ACT)	N	N	N	Content-based This act contains defamation, Chapter 9	Informing public about public interest issues Accuracy Fairness
30-35	Defamation Act 2005 (Vic) Defamation Act 2005 (NSW) Defamation Act 2005 (Qld) Defamation Act 2005 (Tas) Defamation Act 2005 (SA) Defamation Act 2005 (NT)	N	N	N	Content-based X6 In Public Interest defence Fair report of public concern	Informing public about public interest issues X6 Accuracy x 6 Fairness x 6
36	Defamation Act 2005 (WA)	N	N	N	Content-based Fair report of public concern	Informing public

37	District Court Act 1973 (NSW)	News media organisation. S 178			Organisation-based	Informing the public Business
38-39	Evidence Acts: 1995 (Cth) 2011 (ACT)	Journalist S 126J	Shield law S 126K (1)	N	Activity-based X2	Informing the public X2 Informant required X2
40	Evidence Act 2001 (Tas)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
41-43	Evidence Acts: 1995 (NSW) 2025 (WA) 1929 (SA)	Journalist S 126J S 179 S 72	Shield law S 126K S 180 S 72B (1)(a)(i)	N	Person-based x3	Informing the public X3 Profession X3
44	Evidence (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)	Journalist S 127A (6)(a-b)	Shield law S 127A (1)	N	Activity-based	Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Contributing to public sphere deliberation
45	Evidence Act 1977 (Qld)	Journalist S 14R	Shield law S 14V	N	Activity-based	Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Regularity Ethical considerations Contributing to public sphere deliberation
46	Evidence Act 2008 (Vic)	Journalist S 126J	Shield law S 126K	N	Activity-based	Profession Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation Significant proportion

						Ethical considerations Regularity
47	Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Act 2021 (Cth)	News Publisher S 7 (1)	Entitled to make special appeal S 232 (2)	N	Person-based	Business Informing the public
48	Federal Court of Australia Act 1976 (Cth)	News Publisher S 37AA	Entitled to make special appeal S 37AH (2)(d)	N	Person-based	Business Informing the public
49	Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)	N	N	N	N	NA
50	Freedom of Information Act 2016 (ACT)	N	N	N	N	NA
51	Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)	N	N	N	N	NA
52	Geneva Conventions Act 1957 (Cth)	N	War correspondents are able to accompany the armed forces (eg. Schedule 1, a 13 (4)) Journalists receive general civilian "protection against dangers arising from military operations" Schedule 5, aa 79, 50)	N	Person-based	None
53	Open Courts Act 2013 (Vic)	News media organisation S 3	Able to make special appeal S 15 (1)(b)(v)	N	Organisation-based	Informing the public Business
54	Magistrates' Court (General) Rules 2005 (WA) [Subsidiary Legislation]	Media Organisation S 40A	May apply for court transcript or exhibit s 40B	N	Activity-based	Informing the public

55	National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022 (Cth)	N	Shield law provision s 31	N	Person-based	Profession Occupation
56	Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)	N	1. Exemption s 104(1)(e) 2. Exemption s 205(5)	N	1. Content-based AND 2. Person-based	1: Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Profession Occupation 2: NA
57	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023 (Cth)	N	Shield law s 24F (3)	N	Person-based	Professional
58	Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	Definitions are given for 3 out of the 5 journalism understandings 1. Media organisation S 6 (1) 3. Journalist Schedule 2, S 15 (2) 5. Journalistic material Schedule 2, S 15 (3)	2. Shield law S66 (1A) 1 & 4 Exemption S 7B (4) 3 & 5 Exemption Schedule 2, s 15 (1)-(1A)	N	Five different understandings. 1: activity based. s 6 (1). 2: person based. S 66 (1A) 3: person based. Schedule 2, s 15 (2). 4: Organisation based. S 7B (4). 5: content based. (Schedule 2, s 15 (3).	1: Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation 2: None 3: Profession Ethical considerations 4: Ethical considerations 5: Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation

59	Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Act 2023	Journalism ss 28; 51.	Exemption ss 28; 51	N	Activity-based	Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Professional Occupation
60	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2022 (NSW)	Journalist Same as the EA 1995 (NSW) Schedule 2	N	Recipient of public interest disclosures S 28(1)	Person-based	Informing the public Profession
61	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
62	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
63	Public Interest Disclosure Act	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
64	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)	Journalist S 20 (4)	N	Recipient of public interest disclosures S 20	Activity-based	Occupation
65	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018 (SA)	Journalist S 4	N	Recipient of public interest disclosures S 6 (a)	Person-based	Informing the public Profession Occupation
66	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 (WA)	Journalist S 7A (1)	N	Recipient of public interest disclosures S 7A (2)	Person-based	Profession Occupation Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation

67	Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (ACT)	N	N	Recipient of public interest disclosures S 27 (2); s 27A (2)	Person-based	Informant
68	Public information Act 2010 (NT)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
69	Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
70	Right to Information Act 2009 (Tas)	Journalist S 5 (1)	Fee waiver S 16 (2)(ba)	N	Activity-based	Profession Ethical considerations Informing the public
71	Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)	N	N	N	No understanding of journalism	NA
72	Serious Offenders Act 2018 (Vic)	N	N	Aiding police s 277 (3).	Activity-based	None
73	Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 (Cth)	N	N	N	Activity-based "gathering and presentation by the SBS of news" s 10.	Accuracy, Ethical considerations
74	Summary Offences Act 1953 (SA)	Media Organisation S 16B (9)	Special defences S 26B (6), (7)	N	Organisation-based Activity-based (undefined) s 26B (6)(a)	Ethical considerations Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues
75	Summary Offences Act 2005 (Qld)	Journalist. It says it uses the same definition as the Evidence Act 1977, section 14R.	Excuse for spectating hooning events S 19C (3)(a) and publishing material about offending behaviours S 26B (2)	N	Activity-based	Informing the Public about Public Interest Issues Regularity Ethical considerations

						Contributing to public sphere deliberation
76	Supreme Court Act 1970 (Cth)	News media organisation S 127	Request recording of judgment S 128	N	Organisation-based	Informing the public Business
77	Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (Cth)	N	N	Recipient of information from a "source" S 5 (1) Target of journalist information warrant S 180L	Person-based	Professional Informant
78	Victoria Police Act 2013 (Vic)	Journalism S 235 (1) Media Organisation s 235 (1)	N	Recipients of photos from police S 238 (1)	Activity-based Person-based	Informing the public Contributing to public sphere deliberation

Appendix D - Statutory journalism definitions (key words in bold)

Term	Definition	Acts containing this definition	Type of journalism understanding
Core news	"core news content means **content** that reports, investigates or explains: issues or events that are relevant in engaging Australians in **public debate** and in informing **democratic decision-making**; or current issues or events of public significance for Australians at a local, regional or national level."	*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52A.	Content-based
Covered news	"covered news content means **content** that is any of the following: core news content; content that reports, investigates or explains current issues or events of interest to Australians"	*Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) s 52A.	Content-based
Journalism	"journalism means the **practice** of **collecting**, **preparing** for dissemination or disseminating any of the following material for the purpose of **making it available** to the public material having the character of news or current affairs; material consisting of commentary or opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs."	*Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) s 465F(3). *Victoria Police Act 2013* (Vic) s 235(1).	Activity-based
Journalism	"The **publication** of material that is or relates to a news report, or a current affairs report"	*Public Health (Tobacco and Other Products) Act 2023* (Cth) ss 28, 51.	Activity-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person engaged in the profession or practice of **reporting** for, **photographing**, **editing**, **recording** or **making**: television or radio programs; or datacasting content; of a news, current affairs, information or documentary character."	Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth) Part 13, Div 4, s 202 (5).	Activity-based

Journalist	"journalist means a **person** who is working in a **professional** capacity as a journalist for any of the following: a newspaper or magazine; a radio or television broadcasting service; an electronic service (including a service provided through the internet) that: is operated on a commercial basis, or operated by a body that provides a national broadcasting service (within the meaning of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992); and is similar to a newspaper, magazine or radio or television broadcast."	*Corporations Act 2011* (Cth) s 1317AAD (3).	Person-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person who is engaged in the profession or **practice of reporting, photographing, editing or recording** for a media report of a news, current affairs, information or documentary nature; and is **paid** to **perform** that profession or practice by a person, or body, that is subject to a code of **ethics** and a procedure for the Australian Press Council, or for another person or body that is prescribed, to deal with complaints about persons engaging in such a profession or practice; or is the holder of a licence under the Broadcasting."	*Court Security Act 2017* (Tas) s 3. *Right to Information Act 2009* (Tas) s 5 (1).	Activity-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person engaged in the profession or practice of **reporting, photographing, editing or recording** for a media report of a news, current affairs, information or documentary character."	*Court Security Act 2005* (NSW) s 4.	Activity-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person who is **engaged and active in the publication** of news and who may be given information by an informant in the expectation that the information may be published in a news medium"	*Evidence Act 1995* (Cth) s 126J (1). *Evidence Act 2011* (ACT) s 126J	Activity-based

Journalist	"journalist means a **person** engaged in the **profession** or **occupation** of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a news medium"	*Evidence Act 1995* (NSW) s 126J. *Evidence Act 2025* (WA) s 179. *Evidence Act 1929* (SA) s 72. *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* (SA) s 4.	Person-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person who: **obtains** new or noteworthy information about matters of **public interest**; and (b) **deals with** the information by: **preparing** the information for a news medium; or **providing** comment, opinion or analysis of the information for a news medium."	*Evidence Act 2011* (NT) s 127A (6).	Activity-based
Journalist	"A person is a journalist if the person is **engaged and active in gathering and assessing** information about matters of **public interest**; and **preparing** the information, or **providing** comment or opinion on or analysis of the information, for publication in a news medium. In determining whether a person is a journalist, a court may consider the following matters whether the person is **regularly** engaged and active in the activities mentioned in subsection; whether the person complies with a recognised **professional standard or code of practice** in **carrying out the activities**; whether the publisher of the news medium complies with a recognised professional standard or code of practice in publishing information in the news medium; any other matter the court considers relevant"	*Evidence Act 1977* (Qld) s 14R (1). *Summary Offences Act 2005* (Qld) Schedule 2. *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) 205C.	Activity-based
Journalist	"journalist means a person engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism in connection with the	*Evidence Act 2008* (Vic) s 126J (1-2).	Activity-based

	publication of information, comment, opinion or analysis in a news medium; […] For the purpose of the definition of journalist, in determining if a person is engaged in the profession or occupation of journalism regard must be had to the following factors(a) whether a **significant proportion of the person's professional activity involves**(i) the practice of **collecting** and **preparing** information having the character of news or current affairs; or (ii) **commenting** or **providing** opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs for dissemination in a news medium; (b) whether information, having the character of news or current affairs, **collected** and **prepared** by the person is **regularly** published in a news medium; (c) whether the person's comments or opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs is **regularly published** in a news medium; (d) whether, in respect of the publication of (i) any information collected or prepared by the person; or (ii) any comment or opinion on or analysis of news or current affairs by the person or the publisher of the information, comment, opinion or analysis is accountable to comply (through a complaints process) with recognised journalistic or media professional **standards or codes** of practice."		
Journalist	"journalist means a **person** engaged in the **occupation** of writing or editing material intended for publication in the print or electronic news media"	*Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (NSW) Schedule 2. *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2010* (Qld) s 20 (4).	Person-based
Journalist	"journalist means a **person** engaged in the **profession** or **occupation** of journalism in connection with the publication of information in a	*Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* (WA) s 7A (1).	Person-based

	medium for the dissemination to the public or a section of the public of news and observations on news"		
Journalist	"A journalist is a person who: (a) **works in a professional capacity** as a journalist; and (b) is subject to: (i) **standards** of professional conduct that apply to journalists; or (ii) a **code** of practice that applies to journalists"	*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 15 (2).	Person-based
Journalistic capacity	"journalistic capacity means a capacity as a journalist, editor, producer or other person involved in **the process of making** news reports or current affairs reports"	*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth) Dictionary.	Activity-based
Journalistic material	"**Material** is journalistic material if it: has the character of news, current affairs or a documentary; or consists of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs or a documentary; or consists of editorial content relating to news, current affairs or a documentary"	*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 15 (3).	Content-based
Local news program	"local news program means: **a program** that consists solely of local news and/or local weather information; or a program: that consists primarily of local news and/or local weather information; and the remainder of which consists of other news and/or other weather information; but does not include: a short segment, or a headline update, that is broadcast for the sole or primary purpose of promoting another program; or a short segment, or a headline update, that repeats news content that has previously been broadcast by the licensee concerned"	*Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) s 43AA (7).	Content-based
Media activity purposes	"media activity purposes means the purposes of **collecting**, **preparing** for the distribution of, or **distributing** material having the character of news, current affairs or a documentary; or material	*Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913* (WA) s 221BD (1).	Activity-based

	consisting of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs, or a documentary."		
Media organisation	"media organisation means an organisation that **disseminates** news or information to the public through the press or by means of radio, television or the internet"	*Magistrate Court (General) rules 2005* (WA) s 40A. *Criminal Procedure Rules 2005* (WA) s 51 (1A).	Activity-based
Media organisation	"media organisation means **an organisation** that engages in broadcasting pursuant to a licence under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 of the Commonwealth or that is otherwise authorised under a law of the Commonwealth to engage in broadcasting; or an organisation that is a constituent body of the Australian Press Council or is authorised under a law of the Commonwealth to engage in publishing."	*Summary Offences Act 1953* (SA) s 26B (9).	Organisation-based
Media organisation	"media organisation means an organisation whose **activities consist of or include the collection, preparation for dissemination or dissemination** of the following material for the purpose of making it available to the public: material having the character of news, current affairs, information or a documentary; material consisting of commentary or opinion on, or analysis of, news, current affairs, information or a documentary."	*Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) s 6 (1).	Activity-based
Media organisation	"media organisation means a **person** or **body** that engages in journalism"	*Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) s 465F (3). Victoria Police Act 2013 (Vic) s 235 (1).	Person-based

News media organisation	"news media organisation means a **commercial enterprise** that engages in the **business** of broadcasting or publishing news or a public broadcasting service that engages in the dissemination of news through a public news medium."	*Court Information Act 2010* (NSW), s 10 (5). *Court Suppression and Non-publication Orders Act 2010* (NSW) s 3. *Open Courts Act 2013* (Vic) s 3. *Supreme Court Act 1970* (NSW) s 127. *District Court Act 1973* (NSW) s 178. *Court Security Act 1980* (Vic) s 2(1).	Organisation-based
News or current affairs program	"news or current affairs program means any of the following: (a) a news bulletin; (b) a sports news bulletin; (c) a program (whether presenter-based or not) whose sole or dominant purpose is to provide analysis, commentary or discussion principally designed to inform the general community about social, economic or political issues of current relevance to the general community"	*Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) Schedule 4, Part 1, s 2.	Content-based
News publisher	"news publisher means a **person** engaged in the **business** of publishing news or a public or community broadcasting service engaged in the publishing of news through a public news medium"	*Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Act 2021* (Cth) s7. *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth) s 37AA.	Person-based

Appendix E – Journalism themes in finalised ACMA investigations

https://www.acma.gov.au/action-content-complaints-and-investigations

Accuracy	Fairness	Privacy	Impartiality	Diversity of perspectives	Distinguishing factual material from commentary/ analysis	Ethical consideration eg Minimising harm	Disclosure of commercial arrangement
BI-690	BI-682	BI-657	BI-690	BI-612	BI-647 (refs Mac Dict)	BI-555	BI-678
BI-682	BI-662	BI-649	BI-631	BI-587		BI-558	BI-680
BI-662	BI-645	BI-624	BI-622	BI-485		BI-561	BI-681
BI-650	BI-646	BI-555	BI-610	BI-426		BI-543	BI-583
BI-645	BI-631	BI-558	BI-611	BI-360		BI-519	BI-549
BI-646	BI-637	BI-552	BI-612			BI-522	BI-559
BI-631	BI-610	BI-557	BI-587			BI-467	
BI-647	BI-611	BI-531	BI-557			BI-468	
BI-628	BI-521	BI-535	BI-541			BI-433	
BI-622	BI-525	BI-536	BI-543			BI-363	
BI-637	BI-484	BI-519	BI-535			BI-405	
BI-613	BI-467	BI-484	BI-521			BI-348	
BI-612	BI-468	BI-523	BI-525			BI-451	
BI-579	BI-461	BI-467	BI-456			BI-402	
BI-557	BI-363	BI-468	BI-428			BI-397	
BI-568	BI-405	BI-434	BI-407			BI-398	
BI-541	BI-418	BI-448	BI-411			BI-349	
BI-531	BI-403	BI-608	BI-347			BI-351	
BI-536			BI-360			BI-352	
BI-529			BI-396				
BI-521			BI-403				
BI-525			BI-346				
BI-484			BI-442				

BI-485 BI-522 BI-467 BI-468 BI-456 BI-432 BI-461 BI-428 BI-363 BI-405 BI-407 BI-411 BI-418 BI-360 BI-403 BI-442							
39	**18**	**18**	**23**	**5**	**1**	**15**	**6**

Appendix F – Journalism themes occurring in Australian broadcasting codes

	Accuracy 11/11	Fairness 10/11	Impartiality 6/11	Ethical considerations 7/11	Diverse perspectives 3/11	Distinguish factual material from other content 8/11	Privacy 5/11	Disclosure of commercial arrangement 1/11
Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice (2025). "News and Journalistic Content" (activity based)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Commercial Radio Code of Practice (2017). "News and Current Affairs Programs" (activity based). Note: Current affairs programs don't need impartiality. Also, definitions for Current Affairs Program and News Program given on pp 23-24	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Subscription Narrowcast Radio Codes of Practice (2013). "news and current affairs programs" (activity based)	Y	Y				Y	Y	
Open Narrowcasting Codes of Practice (2011). "news and current affairs programs" (activity based).	Y	Y				Y		

Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice (2015). (activity based). Current affairs do not need to be impartial.	Y	Y (news only)	Y (news only)	Y		Y (news only)	Y	Y
Subscription Broadcast Television Codes of Practice (2013). "News and Current Affairs Programs" (activity based) Definition for news and current affairs programs given on page 15.	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	
Community Television Codes of Practice (2011). "news and current affairs programs" (activity based)	Y	Y		Y		Y		
Subscription Narrowcast Television Codes of Practice (2013). "news and current affairs" (activity based)	Y	Y				Y		
Open Narrowcast Television Codes of Practice (2009)	Y	Y		Y		Y		
ABC Code of Practice (2024)	Y	Y	Y				Y	
SBS Code of Practice (2022)	Y		Y	Y	Y			

Appendix G – List of interviewees for Chapter 4

Interviewee	Main Channel	Date of interview	Date quotes sent to interviewee for check	Registered channel location	Education
Michael West	The West Report	15 June 2023	29 June 2024	Australia	Journalist Cadetship
Jochem Boodt	The Present Past	16 June 2023	4 July 2025	The Netherlands	Masters (international relations/history)
Tom Nicholas	Tom Nicholas	20 June 2023	26 June 2025	United Kingdom	PhD (theatre) (former academic)
Georgie Taylor	münecat	5 July 2023	26 June 2025	United Kingdom	Bachelor (music)
Jessie Earl	Jessie Gender	11 August 2023	10 July 2025	United States	Bachelor (film)
Kristo Langker	friendlyjordies	25 August 2023	7 November 2024	Australia	Bachelor (music) (in progress). Jordan Shanks-Markovina has a bachelor's degree (political science).
Joeri Schasfoort	Money & Macro	6 September 2023	19 May 2025	Belgium	PhD (economics) (former academic)
Ryan McBeth	Ryan McBeth	18 September 2023	19 May 2025	United States	Masters (cyber security), (also published a peer-reviewed article on dealing with misinformation)
John Cadogan	Auto Expert John Cadogan	6 October 2023	24 July 2025	Australia	Bachelor (engineering)
Grady Hillhouse	Practical Engineering	20 October 2023	11 July 2025	United States	Masters (engineering)
Zoe Burke	Zoe Bee	25 October 2023	13 July 2025	United States	Masters (English)
Artem Dikarey	The Russian Dude	26 October 2023	16 July 2025	United States	MBA
Cahal Moran	Unlearning Economics	5 December 2023	18 July 2025	United Kingdom	PhD (economics) (current fellow at London School of Economics)
Anna Danylchuk	Anna from Ukraine	12 December 2023	21 July 2025	Ukraine	PhD (linguistics) (academic)
Marton Barcza	TechAltar	14 December 2023	24 July 2025	Germany	Bachelor (international business)
Phil Edwards	Phil Edwards	9 January 2024	21 July 2025	United States	Bachelor (English) (Honours)
Zaid Tabani	Zaid Tabani	17 January 2024	22 July 2025	United States	Bachelor (music)
Ransford James (aka Peter) Deveaux-Isaacs	Foreign Man in a Foreign Land	29 January 2024	22 July 2025	United States	Masters (political science)
Amanda Hootman	Hoots	31 January 2024	17 July 2025	United States	Bachelor (performing arts) (Honours)
Konrad Michalski	Punter's Politics	28 November 2024	25 July 2025	Australia	Masters (entrepreneurship)

Appendix H – Potential youtuber interviewees: Total pool

#	Channel	Education	Date contacted	Response	Subscribers as of 3-Jul-25
1	The West Report	Journalism cadetship	31-Jan-23	Agreed	105k
2	The Present Past	Masters	8-Feb-23	Agreed	386k
3	Friendlyjordies (Shanks-Markovina/Langker)	Bachelor's degree/ bachelor's degree (in progress)	23-Feb-23	Agreed	1.39m
4	Tom Nicholas	PhD	25-May-23	Agreed	619k
5	Legal Eagle	Bachelor's degree, JD	17-Jun-23	None	3.73m
6	münecat	Bachelor's degree	20-Jun-23	Agreed	489k
7	Philosophy Tube	Masters	22-Jun-23	None	1.66m
8	Coffeezilla	Bachelor's degree	22-Jun-23	Declined	4.24m
9	Money & Macro	PhD	24-Jun-23	Agreed	589k
10	Artur Rehi	Associate of Arts degree	28-Jun-23	Declined	720k
11	Sydney Watson	Masters	7-Jul-23	Agreed but then no response	1.07m
12	Jessie Gender	Bachelor's degree	12-Jul-23	Agreed	281k
13	Elina Charatsidou	Masters	27-Jul-23	None	88.6k
14	Rebecca Watson	Bachelor's degree	31-Aug-23	None	217k
15	Awkward Anthems	Unknown	31-Aug-23	None	86.9k
16	Donna	Bachelor's degree	31-Aug-23	None	566k
17	F.D Signifier	Masters	15-Sep-23	None	1.03m
18	Isaac Butterfield	Unknown	15-Sep-23	None	2.2m
19	Ryan McBeth	Masters	15-Sep-23	Agreed	1.04m
20	Johnny Harris	Masters	15-Sep-23	None	6.78m
21	Tee Noir	Unknown	28-Sep-23	None	657k
22	Auto Expert John Cadogan	Bachelor's degree	28-Sep-23	Agreed	426k
23	Cleo Abram	Bachelor's degree	28-Sep-23	None	6.13m
24	Dr. Becky	PhD	28-Sep-23	None	799k
25	Joe Scott	Bachelor's degree	28-Sep-23	None	2.35m
26	Daisy Cousins	Masters	28-Sep-23	None	211k
27	Simon Clark	PhD	28-Sep-23	None	648k
28	Khadija Mbowe	Bachelor's degree	28-Sep-23	None	701k
29	Veritasium (no longer independent)	PhD	13-Oct-23	None	18.2m
30	Medlife Crisis	PhD (in progress)	13-Oct-23	Declined	565k
31	Tom Scott	Masters	13-Oct-23	Declined	6.58m
32	Doctor Mike	Bachelor's degree, DO	13-Oct-23	None	14.1m
33	Scott Manley	Masters	13-Oct-23	None	1.79m
34	The Plain Bagel	Bachelor's degree	13-Oct-23	None	1.06m
35	Knowing Better	Bachelor's degree	13-Oct-23	None	947k
36	Leeja Miller	Bachelor's degree, JD	13-Oct-23	None	621k
37	Practical Engineering	Masters	16-Oct-23	Agreed	4.46m
38	Shanspeare	Bachelor's degree	16-Oct-23	Declined	777k

39	Zoe Bee	Masters	16-Oct-23	Agreed	333k
40	Climate Town	Bachelor's degree	20-Oct-23	None	639k
41	Madisyn Brown	Unknown	20-Oct-23	None	584k
42	The Russian Dude	MBA	20-Oct-23	Agreed	261k
43	NFKRZ	Bachelor's degree	27-Oct-23	None	1.24m
44	Patrick Boyle	Masters	30-Oct-23	None	956k
45	LegalBytes	Bachelor's degree	14-Nov-23	None	274k
46	Anna from Ukraine	PhD	21-Nov-23	Agreed	338k
47	Vlad Vexler	PhD	21-Nov-23	None	192k
48	Unlearning Economics	PhD	21-Nov-23	Agreed	229k
49	RMTransit	Bachelor's degree	21-Nov-23	Declined	335k
50	TLDR (Jack Kelly)	Bachelor's degree	21-Nov-23	None	2.5m
51	TechAltar	Bachelor's degree	21-Nov-23	Agreed	779k
52	Type Ashton	PhD	28-Nov-23	None	195k
53	Elliot Sang	Bachelor's degree	28-Nov-23	None	217k
54	Ray Delahanty | CityNerd	Masters	28-Nov-23	None	355k
55	Brain Blaze	Bachelor's degree, PGLD	1-Dec-23	Declined	480k
56	Second Thought	Bachelor's degree	2-Dec-23	None	1.86m
57	Zaid Tabani	Bachelor's degree	7-Dec-23	Agreed	90.8k
58	hbomberguy	Bachelor's degree	7-Dec-23	None	1.82m
59	Patience Xina	Unknown	7-Dec-23	None	186k
60	Phil Edwards	Bachelor's degree	7-Dec-23	Agreed	430k
61	China Uncensored (Chris Chappell)	Masters	9-Dec-23	None	2.11m
62	Foreign Man in a Foreign Land	Masters	9-Dec-23	Agreed	227k
63	Some More News (Cody Johnston)	Bachelor's degree	9-Dec-23	None	921k
64	Beau of the Fifth Column / Belle of the Ranch	Unknown	9-Dec-23	None	866k
65	laowhy86	Bachelor's degree	10-Dec-23	None	1.02m
66	ContraPoints	Masters	10-Dec-23	None	1.92m
67	Kidology	Bachelor's degree	10-Dec-23	None	268k
68	JaclynGlenn	Bachelor's degree	10-Dec-23	None	786k
69	hoots	Bachelor's degree	12-Dec-23	Agreed	74k
70	Vlogbrothers (Hank Green)	Masters	12-Dec-23	None	3.91m
71	Military Aviation History	Masters	12-Dec-23	None	462k
72	Jordan Harrod	PhD	12-Dec-23	None	86.9k
73	Engineering with Rosie	PhD	12-Dec-23	None	105k
74	Undecided with Matt Ferrell	Masters	12-Dec-23	None	1.64m
75	Caelan Conrad	Unknown	12-Dec-23	None	120k
76	Kyle Hill	Masters	12-Dec-23	None	2.63m
77	Then & Now	Masters	4-Jan-24	None	526k
78	Boy Boy (Aleksa Vulović)	Bachelor's degree	7-Mar-24	None	1.21m
79	Punter's Politics	Masters	26-Sep-24	Agreed	156k
80					
81					

Appendix I – Indicative interview questions

1. Why YouTube?
2. How do you describe yourself as a professional?
3. What type of content do you produce?
4. How does publishing on YouTube impact what you publish?
5. Why do you make videos the way you do?
6. How is your relationship with:
    - YouTube?
    - Your audience?
    - Other youtubers?
7. Can you give me an overview of your business structure?
8. What legal and ethical considerations do you have before you publish?
9. What is your idea of journalism?
10. What are your thoughts on youtubers creating journalism?

Appendix J – Content analysis codebook

Codebook part 1: Newsworthy public interest topic

Newsworthy public interest topic? A topic is newsworthy if it is timely/ relevant to recent or current events. It is a public interest topic if it is relevant to democratic decision-making of audiences.	Yes/No

Codebook part 2: Main topics

Newsworthy public interest topic	**Definition/ examples**		**Non-public interest topic**	**Definition/ examples**
Environment	Includes climate, ecosystems, wildlife, natural disasters.		Comedy	Includes skits, jokes, pranks, joke-based pop-culture reviews.
Economics	Includes economics topics at the domestic or global level, finance, currencies, markets, cost of living.		Music	Includes music videos, song reviews, song covers.
Politics	Includes group power dynamics, war and military conflict, government actions, politicians, party politics, international relations, domestic and international politics.		Education	Videos that explain or teach, give general information about a topic, give self-improvement advice.
Societal issues	Includes social cohesion, crime & policing, alleged wrongdoing, media critique & analysis, culture & celebrity,		History	Information on a historical event/person with no significant connection to a

	emergencies, employment.			current or recent event.
Technology	Includes IT security, AI/LLM, electronics.		Personal	Videos are about the presenter or channel staff, or about the channel.

Appendix K – youtuber content analysis data for Chapters 5 and 7

Money & Macro

n = 81

Public interest topic?

Yes: 73 (90.1%)

No: 8 (9.9%)

Public interest topics: n 73

Economics: 68 (93.15%)

Politics: 5 (6.85%)

Non-public interest topics: n 8

Education: 5 (62.5%)

History: 2 (25%)

Personal: 1 (12.5%)

#	Date	Video name	Link	PI Topic? Y/N	Main topic/ additional notes
1	2021 Jan 19	Janet Yellen's Spectacular Rise to The Top	https://youtu.be/7DkczQKrPiA	Y	Economics - USA
2	2021 Jan 27	Why Private Bank Money Creation is Dangerous	https://youtu.be/90qZccMiW5s	Y	Economics
3	28 Jan 2021	Why Gamestop CRUSHED the Efficient Market Hypothesis	https://youtu.be/BfoQg8cXatY	Y	Economics

4	2021 Feb 4	Why Financial Globalization is Dangerous	https://youtu.be/cDf0V011yJI	Y	Economics
5	2021 Feb 13	How Exchange Rates Are Determined	https://youtu.be/-7ZSav8xvMU	N	Education
6	18 Feb 2021	The Balance of Payments Explained	https://youtu.be/QF3Nsbl3i_o	N	Education
7	24 Feb 2021	How this Algorithm Predicted the Bitcoin 2021 Bubble	https://youtu.be/hvf1Zngpijg	Y	Economics
8	6 Mar 2021	Denmark's Economy: is the Krone in Trouble?	https://youtu.be/-hztesrzu_M	Y	Economics - Denmark
9	23 Mar 2021	The Economy of Japan: how a Superpower Fell from Grace in Four Decades	https://youtu.be/pU_yyadYgG8	Y	Economics - Japan
10	21 Apr 2021	Lebanon's Economy: how to Fix its Currency Crisis	https://youtu.be/yPDN17LJzIU	Y	Economics - Lebanon
11	1 May 2021	The Dutch Economy is NOT the Most Unequal	https://youtu.be/tW_kw6OPXc0	Y	Economics – The Netherlands
12	2 Jul 2021	Best Country for the Middle Class (ft. @Econoboi)	https://youtu.be/FuZ5WO8xoks	Y	Economics – USA & The Netherlands
13	11 Aug 2021	Economics Explained's Hyperinflation Nonsense	https://youtu.be/UkClrikc1bk	Y	Economics – the Netherlands, fact-checking
14	28 Aug 2021	The Hidden History of Money in Medieval Europe	https://youtu.be/ohM2oVHM2i4	N	Education
15	23 Sept 2021	The Economics of China's Evergrande Crisis	https://youtu.be/_LJlTflaw6o	Y	Economics - China

16	10 Oct 2021	Stagflation Coming? MMT Good? QE Bad? Best Econ Books? | Q&A Summary	https://youtu.be/wgszWF8sY10	Y	Economics – Live stream to celebrate 60k followers
17	8 Nov 2021	The Controversial Rise of Central Banking	https://youtu.be/0TBAJb-O2Oo	Y	Economics
18	20 Jan 2022	How Russia's Economy Shields Itself From Western Sanctions	https://youtu.be/4Ftkn0sDnCg	Y	Economics - Russia
19	27 Jan 2022	What is Actually Causing Inflation? A Deep Dive (ft. @unlearningeconomics9021)	https://youtu.be/VEZsgAgYDhw	Y	Economics
20	17 Feb 2022	Quantitative Easing is Not the Reason for High Inflation	https://youtu.be/prF1aUeTzzM	Y	Economics
21	3 Mar 2022	How The West Broke Russia's Economy	https://youtu.be/Q79x6jtaSdo	Y	Economics - Russia
22	25 Mar 2022	The Spectacular Rise & Fall of Russia's Economy	https://youtu.be/2F4x2-rVkIk	N	History - Russia
23	13 Apr 2022	Who is Actually Winning The Economic War?	https://youtu.be/7JkQ7SBsVrs	Y	Economics - Russia
24	14 May 2022	Why Afghanistan is Dying	https://youtu.be/b_qVuIf5kdM	N	History
25	19 May 2022	Why Türkiye's Lira is Broken (It's Not Interest Rates) (ft. @IntoEurope)	https://youtu.be/mb_ZQRZr7Nw	Y	Economics - Turkey
26	1 Jun 2022	Why Russia Is Making More Money Than Ever	https://youtu.be/nfyM81sEXhs	Y	Economics - Russia
27	2 Jul 2022	Do Central Banks Really Control Inflation?	https://youtu.be/tkDVeaTl61o	N	Education

28	20 Jul 2022	Who Really Killed Sri Lanka's Economy?	https://youtu.be/6mab3gdOOIw	Y	Economics – Sri Lanka
29	17 Aug 2022	The Fed's Great Inflation Mystery	https://youtu.be/zxwO4xw4CZ0	N	Education - inflation
30	27 Aug 2022	Nonsense! China's Economy Will NOT Collapse	https://youtu.be/rsBZ4HG7HWI	Y	Economics – China, fact-checking
31	23 Sept 2022	Money & Macro Channel Trailer	https://youtu.be/6IGIp8-kbgM	N	Personal – channel trailer
32	8 Oct 2022	Europe's Upcoming Recession	https://youtu.be/d75Nabx9AsY	Y	Economics - Europe
33	28 Oct 2022	China's Economy is 60% Smaller Than We Thought	https://youtu.be/A5A5Eu0ra3I	Y	Economics - China
34	16 Nov 2022	Economist Fact-Checks Ray Dalio's China Analysis	https://youtu.be/s1iv0q_SW3E	Y	Economics – fact-checking
35	1 Dec 2022	This Theory Predicts The End of Crypto	https://youtu.be/aj2UZ31aIUA	Y	Economics - crypto
36	10 Dec 2022	Crypto's Great Financial Crisis: Everything You Need To Know (So Far)	https://youtu.be/UxxAs6INzHU	Y	Economics - crypto
37	23 Dec 2022	How Erdogan "Saved" Turkey's Economy	https://youtu.be/rxcr2QA23gg	Y	Economics - Turkey
38	17 Jan 2023	India's Plan to End China's Financial Dominance	https://youtu.be/d6pWuBoeXH8	Y	Economics – India
39	2 Feb 2023	China's Threat to The U.S. Dollar Is Way Overblown	https://youtu.be/49iLl-V4xos	Y	Economics – China & USA

40	22 Feb 2023	Sanctions, 1 Year Later	https://youtu.be/y1R7rQ9dijg	Y	Economics – Russia
41	24 Mar 2023	Italy's Debt is NOT The Problem	https://youtu.be/WezK5HKgiS0	Y	Economics – Italy
42	1 May 2023	The Rise & Fall of Europe's Most Notorious Bank	https://youtu.be/_ItvQXnDXno	Y	Economics - Europe
43	16 May 2023	Why Chinese Cars Are Flooding The World	https://youtu.be/QhF53DmtF2U	Y	Economics - China
44	29 May 2023	Turkey's Economy Cannot Hold Out Much Longer	https://youtu.be/fYn_UHskOnc	Y	Economics
45	24 Jun 2023	Economist Fact-Checks Johnny Harris	https://youtu.be/eyCaXPcDvng	Y	Economics - Mentions series of videos calling out big YouTube channels when they over-simplify economics
46	30 Jun 2023	Did Sanctions Just Break Russia After All?	https://youtu.be/TaiaI_NvqyU	Y	Economics - Russia
47	21 Jul 2023	How China Hides Trillions From America	https://youtu.be/54-YmBGMSyY	Y	Economics – China & USA
48	1 Aug 2023	The Problem With Britain's Economy	https://youtu.be/vElaMskCwkY	Y	Economics – the UK
49	17 Aug 2023	Why the Rich World is Dying and How to Save It	https://youtu.be/x6e03HWI2nQ	Y	Economics – Global fertility
50	31 Aug 2023	Is Germany The Sick Man of Europe?	https://youtu.be/vTY6H9RWiqQ	Y	Economics - Germany
51	1 Oct 2023	Why Inflation is Coming Down So Fast	https://youtu.be/7GMSzNm6i_U	Y	Economics

52	1 Nov 2023	Economist Fact-Checks Zeihan's China Collapse Story	https://youtu.be/XupM5_zHDbM	Y	Economics – Fact checking
53	24 Nov 2023	Economist explains why China's growth miracle is failing	https://youtu.be/7bOSWQttmvU	Y	Economics - China
54	8 Dec 2023	Why Central Banks Are Launching Digital Currencies	https://youtu.be/Dpu6G_UlSdM	Y	Economics
55	21 Dec 2023	Argentina's Radical Plan to End Inflation, Explained	https://youtu.be/WVAn0DW2asI	Y	Economics - Argentina
56	9 Feb 2024	Why Voters Hate Biden's Booming Economy	https://youtu.be/o1EDeOzql7U	Y	Economics - USA
57	21 Mar 2024	What a Deglobalized Economy Will Look Like	https://youtu.be/cE10PXeEvj4	Y	Economics – global
58	1 May 2024	Economist explains why you can't afford a house anymore	https://youtu.be/HMDNehHKu7c	Y	Economics
59	22 May 2024	US inflation still too high. Are higher interest rates needed?	https://youtu.be/eX4Sh1sq6HU	Y	Economics – USA
60	May 29, 2024	Why the West rejects a new wave of cheap Chinese goods	https://youtu.be/QmLekaO4LMc	Y	Economics
61	Jun 29, 2024	Shocking democracy wins, the baby crisis, China's export threat & more	https://youtu.be/RLtsyOV16ss	Y	Politics
62	Jul 25, 2024	Economist fact-checks Galloway's doomer take on America's young	https://youtu.be/5Gki-RTPy2o	Y	Economics – fact checking

63	Jul 30, 2024	I interviewed the ECB's chief economist	https://youtu.be/YPe-rC182iE	Y	Economics - Interview of ECB chief economist
64	Aug 6, 2024	Turkey's comeback, Russia's overheating economy & more	https://youtu.be/jeX1DvOieLU	Y	Economics – several countries
65	Aug 22, 2024	Ukraine invades, Italy tricks the rich, CEO's China warning, Bangladesh's revolution & more	https://youtu.be/5kIRWcwatnU	Y	Politics - Really newsy
66	Sep 25, 2024	Economist explains why Europeans are getting poorer... and happier	https://youtu.be/5YAaeOonFRI	Y	Economics - Europe
67	Oct 1, 2024	Italy's comeback, Germany's decline, China's massive stimulus & more	https://youtu.be/SSoTf36Y9do	Y	Economics – various countries
68	Oct 23, 2024	Why solar will soon dominate & what that means for the world	https://youtu.be/edAdJxxstTE	Y	Economics – Renewable energy
69	Nov 7, 2024	What Trump will do to the global economy	https://youtu.be/Y2CYMb4HcIM	Y	Economics - USA
70	Nov 23, 2024	Why Germany's economy is much stronger than you think	https://youtu.be/cg43s4PkPX0	Y	Economics - Germany
71	Dec 6, 2024	Is this radical economic idea ruining Germany?	https://youtu.be/pX-_8xb40Ho	Y	Economics – Germany
72	Dec 11, 2024	How much longer can Israel keep fighting?	https://youtu.be/kLrk36h64BE	Y	Politics – Israel
73	Dec 19, 2024	The world in 2025 - 5 key trends to watch out for	https://youtu.be/Dc3jWE3nGXcn	Y	Economics

74	Dec 22, 2024	Economists dropped $10M in rural Africa. It changed economic science forever.	https://youtu.be/BD9kEHvXlGQ	Y	Economics - Africa
75	Jan 23, 2025	Is the U.S turning into an oligarchy?	https://youtu.be/FcAu0vYN39g	Y	Politics – USA
76	Feb 1, 2025	Economist explains the A.I. bubble	https://youtu.be/fMDk5rI9pU0	Y	Economics
77	Feb 22, 2025	If Spain is the world's best economy, why are they so unhappy?	https://youtu.be/kkNaFOKMLJk	Y	Economics - Spain
78	Mar 7, 2025	Why gold & Bitcoin will not be reserve currencies (renamed to "Why central banks are increasingly buying gold and Bitcoin")	https://youtu.be/UVflys4loV0	Y	Economics - Banking
79	Mar 12, 2025	The real reason Argentina's economy is such a mess	https://youtu.be/E7MzfNTSk4A	Y	Economics – Argentina
80	Mar 27, 2025	Why Europe will be stronger without America	https://youtu.be/eTS16oLluyo	Y	Politics
81	Apr 4, 2025	Why Trump's tariff chaos actually makes sense (big picture)	https://youtu.be/1ts5wJ6OfzA	Y	Economics

Ryan McBeth

n – 150

Public interest topic?

Yes: 92 (61.3%)

No: 58 (38.7%)

Public interest topics: n 92

Politics: 89 (96.7%)

Technology: 2 (2.2%)

Societal issue: 1 (1.1%)

Non-public interest topics: n 58

Education: 34 (58.6%)

Personal: 18 (31%)

Comedy: 3 (5.2%)

History: 3 (5.2%)

#	Date	Video name	Link	PI Topic ? Y/N	Main topic/ additional notes
1	Mar 23, 2022	Why does Russia think there are Nazis in Ukraine - Part 2	https://youtu.be/1UpFPMnPKlk	Y	Politics – Russia & Ukraine
2	Mar 25, 2022	How to spot a Russian Bot on YouTube	https://youtu.be/Iq2teKegeLc	N	Education
3	Mar 27, 2022	What is the Russian Army Tooth to Tail Ratio?	https://youtu.be/UmlGphUE9Xc	N	Education
4	Apr 3, 2022	Are tanks obsolete?	https://youtu.be/r2s0Szx-kVs	N	Education
5	Apr 8, 2022	Is the A-10 Warthog Obsolete?	https://youtu.be/vTopl9g0huc	N	Education

6	Apr 14, 2022	How to Become a Software Engineer in 2022	https://youtu.be/MSkmv2RlYOc	N	Education
7	Apr 16, 2022	Army Stories : There's only one thief in the Army	https://youtu.be/J37ctXulZ48	N	Personal
8	Apr 21, 2022	How do Thermobaric "Vacuum Bombs" actually work?	https://youtu.be/1PJGHJ7Od1k	N	Education
9	Apr 24, 2022	I was wrong about the Makarov	https://youtu.be/O4W0ptEk_J0	Y	Politics – Fact Correction "If I was wrong about something I'm going to make a correction" (0:03).
10	Apr 27, 2022	Army Stories: The first time I came in last	https://youtu.be/C2umQ5gVmcU	N	Personal
11	Apr 30, 2022	Orange is the new Z	https://youtu.be/EqbEM600LVQ	Y	Politics - Russia
12	May 4, 2022	Army stories: McRambo- The Force of Freedom	https://youtu.be/oAZf8Was9TU	N	Personal
13	May 7, 2022	What Makes the Marine Corps so Special?	https://youtu.be/FuU6KZca-IU	N	Education
14	May 14, 2022	Can Ukraine destroy the Kerch (Crimea) Bridge?	https://youtu.be/kBECiXavaGA	Y	Politics
15	May 21, 2022	Army Stories : The Redneck and the Racketeer	https://youtu.be/GblzVWcHUFo	N	Personal
16	May 28, 2022	5 Tips for Personal Cybersecurity	https://youtu.be/7BhJCK0PCF4	N	Education
17	Jun 4, 2022	Maintainers: The real stars of the Air Force (Featuring the F-16)	https://youtu.be/tmM5KSoW2qA	N	Education
18	Jun 11, 2022	Cybersecurity While Traveling	https://youtu.be/eGMvWVZUGhg	N	Education

19	Jun 17, 2022	An American makes English Tea	https://youtu.be/5aneZBswkJc	N	Personal
20	Jun 25, 2022	How artillery works - Featuring the M777 Howitzer	https://youtu.be/Kux_4KGuj1w	N	Education
21	Jun 26, 2022	Why this missile U -Turned	https://youtu.be/WnJOeqn9Jql	Y	Politics
22	Jul 2, 2022	Army Stories: The Wrong Kind of Irish	https://youtu.be/s39A7qfiBNU	N	Personal
23	Jul 3, 2022	Is this Ukrainian Anti Tank Ambush Real?	https://youtu.be/E8caasPzonU	Y	Politics
24	Jul 9, 2022	Stop an insider cybersecurity threat!	https://youtu.be/CbPLZuNfvb8	N	Education
25	Jul 14, 2022	Kirill Kaprizov and Russia's manpower crisis (Dedovshchina / Дедовщина)	https://youtu.be/R5kvgSuc4Ps	Y	Politics
26	Jul 16, 2022	HIMARS on Russian Radar - how does it get through?	https://youtu.be/ceskPbDtTzY	Y	Politics
27	Jul 20, 2022	Did Russia mistake an SU-34M Bomber for HIMARS missiles?	https://youtu.be/L4L3igdrBG0	Y	Politics
28	Jul 30, 2022	How the Patriot Missile Works (MIM-104)	https://youtu.be/RDJgQErMSdA	N	Education
29	Aug 1, 2022	How to survive a digital breakup	https://youtu.be/fJ7mdhb8o5M	N	Education
30	Aug 15, 2022	Army Stories: The Tao of Soldiering	https://youtu.be/WvCyqtf2ljo	N	Personal
31	Aug 17, 2022	Did a kamikaze drone destroy a radio tower in Russia?	https://youtu.be/0sYm8Grfgp0	Y	Politics
32	Aug 19, 2022	Dynamic Principles Chest Rig and RIA First Aid Kit Review	https://youtu.be/uwLfmjFlj6U	N	Education

33	Aug 20, 2022	What is a Cross Domain Solution (the absolute basics)	https://youtu.be/zThye3swtME	N	Education
34	Aug 25, 2022	Updates: Scammers, Charities, Chest Rigs and Vacation	https://youtu.be/liELgXbKLLs	N	Personal
35	Aug 30, 2022	When will this Russian Howitzer explode? (2A65 Msta-B Barrel life estimation from shell casings)	https://youtu.be/Rx5AKV9e8NM	Y	Politics
36	Sep 3, 2022	How NATO could send Flying Tigers to Ukraine?	https://youtu.be/wKwAmzEfXB8	Y	Politics
37	Sep 8, 2022	Army Stories : Why I wear a Star of David	https://youtu.be/5qtYNKNwz5M	N	Personal
38	Sep 10, 2022	How Airborne operations work : Featuring the 82nd Airborne the Riggers of the 11th Quartermaster	https://youtu.be/oTorTBqCIuE	N	Educational
39	Sep 14, 2022	Taiwan Pitch Meeting - or why China won't & can't invade Taiwan.	https://youtu.be/zJLXMr7AKbs	Y	Politics
40	Sep 16, 2022	Is Russia recruiting mercenaries from prisons?	https://youtu.be/mAhY_DyZ0Y4	Y	Politics
41	Sep 17, 2022	Get started in Cybersecurity with no school	https://youtu.be/Bsyfv3-9o3s	N	Educational
42	Sep 23, 2022	Donetsk City 9/19/22 Attack Crater Analysis	https://youtu.be/EoyNGHkjeyM	Y	Politics
43	Oct 2, 2022	Identifying live rounds used against Iranian protesters	https://youtu.be/SRDI9WGHhlA	Y	Politics
44	Oct 5, 2022	UK Limited Nuclear War Target List	https://youtu.be/FYWcgF4Wwog	Y	Politics
45	Oct 8, 2022	Four tips for new Cybersecurity Grads	https://youtu.be/6ffJt1Bpy0Y	N	Education

46	Oct 15, 2022	Is this Russian training video real?	https://youtu.be/s7K6vN6K1Kw	Y	Politics
47	Oct 17, 2022	Army Stories - How I lost my arm (Never give up the will to live)	https://youtu.be/nRblEK0t2Zw	N	Personal
48	Oct 18, 2022	Is this Anti-Armor Ambush Real?	https://youtu.be/2ZaKioe5egg	Y	Politics
49	Oct 29, 2022	How Nuclear Weapons Work	https://youtu.be/gzmk53DJNUI	N	Education
50	Nov 5, 2022	Quiet Firing - Why companies let Cybersecurity professionals outgrow their pay	https://youtu.be/6BrdB4ivOE0	N	Education
51	Nov 8, 2022	Did a Russian submarine threaten a Norwegian aircraft with MANPADS?	https://youtu.be/uPL9DU3j_xo	Y	Politics
52	Nov 10, 2022	Happy Birthday Marines (My Marine Corps Joke)	https://youtu.be/qbZe_AYJmrM	N	Comedy
53	Nov 16, 2022	Poland Rocket Attack Analysis	https://youtu.be/ZNAaD_a0NJY	Y	Politics
54	Nov 24, 2022	Iranian headstamps and license plate analysis	https://youtu.be/mG3bG37XQIg	Y	Politics
55	Nov 26, 2022	How Penicillin Won World War II	https://youtu.be/QeSMbTrn4Gc	N	History
56	Dec 2, 2022	Can you drive a tank over a frozen river?	https://youtu.be/ODJtwdNNRTc	N	Education
57	Dec 3, 2022	Cybersecurity: Typo squatting and DNSTwist	https://youtu.be/P6O88FWI1eU	N	Education
58	Dec 7, 2022	Russian Airbase Attack Analysis - Ukraine's Doolittle Raid moment.	https://youtu.be/sLVlkZiMJsM	Y	Politics
59	Dec 14, 2022	How to balance story and security	https://youtu.be/Or9H9X3QcFs	N	Personal

60	Dec 20, 2022	Is it possible to invade Russia? (The 4 Kinds of Armies)	https://youtu.be/mY-9lLt8ano	Y	Politics
61	Dec 24, 2022	Promote with Peers Veteran Reacts to Reaction on Reaction Videos	https://youtu.be/yXV-KsWMC8Y	N	Comedy
62	Dec 28, 2022	Boxing Day Engels Air Base Strike Analysis	https://youtu.be/35sZuDq6BpY	Y	Politics
63	Dec 29, 2022	Career Cushioning - Six Skills you can learn over winter break	https://youtu.be/8pyDwqw2ZQs	N	Education
64	Jan 5, 2023	M2 Bradleys to Ukraine?	https://youtu.be/313DBV2knwQ	Y	Politics
65	Jan 9, 2023	Is Elon Musk right about tanks?	https://youtu.be/tK_EcLQAFxk	Y	Politics – fact checking
66	Jan 10, 2023	British Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine?	https://youtu.be/L-ta8PzQB-o	Y	Politics
67	Jan 14, 2023	Ukrainian Bunker Attack Analysis Frame by Frame	https://youtu.be/4vx0sVcPojg	Y	Politics
68	Jan 16, 2023	General Eric Shinseki : He who shall not be named	https://youtu.be/AW3DnRvsdVs	N	History
69	Jan 22, 2023	The HATS Method: How to tell a Tank from Not A Tank (and why you should care)	https://youtu.be/hEna9T4zSM0	N	Education
70	Jan 27, 2023	How to Pass Data from a Hyper-V VM to a host	https://youtu.be/ErpuYOMjwso	N	Education
71	Feb 2, 2023	How to fight a T-72 (METT-T)	https://youtu.be/5Nq012MS7Dc	Y	Politics
72	Feb 6, 2023	What do Army Radio Callsigns Mean?	https://youtu.be/N3axYMfC7ZY	N	Education

73	Feb 12, 2023	Why do Armies do Potemkin Training (and why NATO uses MILES Gear)	https://youtu.be/CPyGJV0AKI4	Y	Politics
74	Feb 14, 2023	The basics of SQL for Cybersecurity Professionals	https://youtu.be/Oir9jCSxmTU	N	Education
75	Feb 25, 2023	Army Stories: The True Power of the U.S. Army	https://youtu.be/8zmJ8-uK7m0	N	Personal
76	Feb 26, 2023	Are Russian and Ukrainian shells being recycled by China?	https://youtu.be/axl6DHdaw3U	Y	Politics
77	Mar 3, 2023	Was Machulishchi Airbase in Minsk Penetrated by a Drone?	https://youtu.be/v8WwA-PEjQ0	Y	Politics
78	Mar 4, 2023	Don't Buy a Mac for Programming or Cybersecurity	https://youtu.be/dY8jnkJfBUA	Y	Technology
79	Mar 6, 2023	I was Wrong - Is Russia using Mad Max MT-LBs?	https://youtu.be/jVd1vy0vABE	Y	Politics
80	Mar 8, 2023	We raised over $19,000 for Johnny Rogers and his relief effort in Ukraine	https://youtu.be/cVPLk8jQ-R8	N	Personal - Raise money for Ukraine cause
81	Mar 11, 2023	Why don't tanks use commercial TVs for navigation?	https://youtu.be/ukbikCTX6jI	Y	Politics
82	Mar 16, 2023	How the Survivability Onion Works	https://youtu.be/4LXRAlPuQbM	N	Education
83	Mar 20, 2023	The Science of Land Mines - Featuring Combat Engineers (12B) and the Assault Breacher Vehicle	https://youtu.be/E---T0Lm4SQ	N	Education
84	Mar 26, 2023	Why Are These Ukrainian APCs Having a Dance Party?	https://youtu.be/F8pMUN-fydE	Y	Politics
85	Apr 1, 2023	Viewer Questions #1 - Bakhmut, TOWs and Train Derailments.	https://youtu.be/dbVTlsm9mgA	Y	Politics

86	Apr 5, 2023	War Crime Analysis for Dummies - how to identify war crime misinformation on video.	https://youtu.be/Z_dpNziZT04	Y	Politics
86	Apr 8, 2023	Viewer Questions #2 - A-10s and M60s and T-72's.	https://youtu.be/QgLWNNWdAdg	Y	Politics
87	Apr 10, 2023	BONUS OSINT Email Roundup #3 - Intel Breach, Challenger 2 tank usage and my Journalism setup.	https://youtu.be/4kbiP72ImTw	Y	Politics
88	Apr 15, 2023	Email OSINT Roundup #4 - AC-130s, Gundams and Eric Snowden	https://youtu.be/3Ia4htRXzko	Y	Politics
89	Apr 17, 2023	The Biofire Solution to the "Smart gun" Problem.	https://youtu.be/hZtWsQrcacw	N	Education
90	Apr 22, 2023	OSINT Rapid Roundup 5 - Ukrainian Tomcats, Black Hawks, Overwatch and where is the Bayraktar drone?	https://youtu.be/WJ6KrHN22vY	Y	Politics
91	Apr 24, 2023	Do the Taiwan Ends Justify The Means (OSINT Bonus Roundup #6)	https://youtu.be/ljbsxywpKZw	Y	Politics
92	Apr 25, 2023	How Marines Evacuate an Embassy	https://youtu.be/Pl8R_HWwrdE	N	Education
93	Apr 29, 2023	OSENT Roundup #7 - AC-130Js, Article 5 and Türkiye, the COSTCO Kirkland of Arms Dealers	https://youtu.be/zQZrClzzgkw	Y	Politics
94	May 1, 2023	Are NATO forces directly engaging Russia? (No)	https://youtu.be/xJnbsycVXdw	Y	Politics
95	May 5, 2023	Was the American Civil War Fought Over Slavery?	https://youtu.be/yoPhdDFdODg	N	History
96	May 6, 2023	OSINT Roundup #8 - USMC Force Design 2030, Why Russia targets civilians, and EMP weapons.	https://youtu.be/evQiNUTlYJU	Y	Politics

97	May 8, 2023	Army Stories : Advice for New Lieutenants	https://youtu.be/rXP0BBvK3Eo	N	Personal
98	May 13, 2023	Question Roundup #9 - Canada's Readiness, Russia's Parade, Wisconsin Guard Fighting Crime	https://youtu.be/8m5uC4rV2qw	Y	Politics
99	May 20, 2023	Roundup 10 with Matsimus and The VSO Gun Channel : Artillery, Flamethrowers, and the M1 Ping	https://youtu.be/SuNT0C3NwJ4	Y	Politics
100	May 21, 2023	How US Army Snipers Work - Featuring the Ft. Benning US Army sniper School.	https://youtu.be/i6SkucyTCpc	N	Education
101	May 26, 2023	Rapid Roundup 11 - Ukrainian Mortars, Trench-clearing Shotguns and Sanitized Storm Shadow Missiles	https://youtu.be/KRvJjUCiUcY	Y	Politics
102	May 29, 2023	Four Capabilities the F-16 Gives Ukraine	https://youtu.be/_N27-krik04	Y	Politics
103	Jun 3, 2023	Email Roundup 12 - How America loses the next war, SOFA, AWACS and F-35s and dogtags	https://youtu.be/hswBO7YpbMI	Y	Politics
104	Jun 3, 2023	Task Force Nighthawk Draws a Line in #kosovo	https://youtu.be/eYi55PpFoyQ	Y	Politics
105	Jun 5, 2023	Unraveling Russian Propaganda Claims of Ukrainian Organ Harvesting	https://youtu.be/QFdRtyn50C8	Y	Politics
106	Jun 10, 2023	How Russia Destroyed the Kakhovka Dam	https://youtu.be/6z4rhBKTT5U	Y	Politics
107	Jun 17, 2023	Rapidfire Roundup #13: Special Guest The Chieftain, Floating Landmines and SPAAGs.	https://youtu.be/Q_5sSF_A9-Y	Y	Politics
108	Jun 19, 2023	Seven Things Russia is Doing Well during the War in Ukraine	https://youtu.be/JbU6zvJilko	Y	Politics

109	Jun 24, 2023	Question Roundup 14 : Corrections, Chinese Equipment, Circular Trenches and Special Guest T-SPLY.	https://youtu.be/XOTfdjRAYEI	Y	Politics
110	Jun 27, 2023	Where will Putin Flee (if he must?)	https://youtu.be/EnuUlrDbGeI	Y	Politics
111	Jul 8, 2023	Email Roundup 15 : Nuclear Wagner, Ukrainian Paratroopers, and Millennium Challenge 2000	https://youtu.be/LiRUjqCk9Ps	Y	Politics
112	Jul 9, 2023	The Truth about Cluster Munitions and DPICM (Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions)	https://youtu.be/C4E4H9mZJbU	Y	Politics
113	Jul 10, 2023	24 hours on the Best Damn Ship in the Navy - The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.	https://youtu.be/FAWCvxHOa7o	N	Personal – Refers to self as journalist
114	Jul 15, 2023	Question Roundup 16- DPICM with special guest Preston Stewart, E2 Hawkeyes, and recruiting problems	https://youtu.be/bLke5cihZTQ	Y	Politics
115	Jul 17, 2023	Five Ways to Save The Army	https://youtu.be/qTzhSwKTM6Y	Y	Politics
116	Jul 18, 2023	Propaganda Hardpoints - Limitations of Russian Misinformation Due to Atlantic Resolve	https://youtu.be/DZ6eMYW7Xwc	Y	Politics
117	Jul 22, 2023	Tanks and Self-Propelled Artillery: What's the Difference?	https://youtu.be/B2RACmx9cbg	N	Education
118	Jul 24, 2023	Four Updates to the Geneva Convention	https://youtu.be/nzB3Xlq_rNk	Y	Politics
119	Jul 26, 2023	Odessa Cathedral Attack Analyses	https://youtu.be/BmvUp6qIwCw	Y	Politics

120	Jul 29, 2023	Why America Needs a Space Force	https://youtu.be/dCCITl1HXl0	Y	Politics
121	Jul 31, 2023	(Corrected) Analyzing UFO Misinformation - An Intelligence Approach	https://youtu.be/vlQYnp9L9uE	Y	Politics - self correction
122	Aug 6, 2023	Army Stories: An Article 15 isn't Necessarily a Career Killer	https://youtu.be/ZdLcy8uAGAE	N	Personal
123	Aug 7, 2023	Email Roundup 17: XBox Controllers for Weapons, Police in War and Killer Robots	https://youtu.be/Bc8DRKbjozg	Y	Politics
124	Aug 9, 2023	Could Wagner Make A Difference in Niger?	https://youtu.be/6ddZ8GDoIeQ	Y	Politics
125	Aug 12, 2023	"If you stopped eating, we wouldn't need Ukrainian Grain." I get roasted on Reddit.	https://youtu.be/tDZJE2PhB3c	N	Comedy
126	Aug 14, 2023	Analyzing Russian CASEVAC Evacuation from Rostov-on-Don (Cargo 300)	https://youtu.be/yvrtHAwc9fc	Y	Politics
127	Aug 15, 2023	Detecting Russian Bots on Twitter - #stolenvalor Russian Influencer Claims Purple Heart and Combat	https://youtu.be/3X2puLun3-8	Y	Politics - investigative
128	Aug 16, 2023	Did Ukraine Bomb Russian Civilians on a Beach?	https://youtu.be/PYyCoV0G5Pw	Y	Politics
129	Aug 19, 2023	Inbox Roundup 18: Can Americans Join the Russian Army, Putin's Popularity and Hawaii Wildfires	https://youtu.be/OO0wySI5PAA	Y	Politics
[...]					
130	Jul 15, 2024	Disinformation from the Events at the Trump Rally	https://youtu.be/5yhRwQ3b6og	Y	Politics

131	Jul 20, 2024	Who is End Wokeness?	https://youtu.be/8zZeZFs5KLQ	Y	Politics – fact checking investigation
132	Jul 23, 2024	Three Strikes - Crowdstrike, Houthi Strike and Israeli Counter-strike	https://youtu.be/BcvrlQaFmqM	Y	Politics
133	Jul 26, 2024	Is Twitter Promoting Conservative Accounts?	https://youtu.be/cMEKwpCsaDQ	Y	Politics
134	Jul 28, 2024	Thoughts about Australia	https://youtu.be/FPIMCbtwjaY	N	Personal
[...]					
135	Feb 15, 2025	6 Ways SECDEF Pete Hegseth Can Fix the Army	https://youtu.be/REa-BxjSe2I	Y	Politics
136	Feb 16, 2025	Are Students Being Paid to Protest Israel	https://youtu.be/98Qmf6Aft58	Y	Politics
137	Feb 18, 2025	Poland: The Most Reliable NATO Country in Europe	https://youtu.be/QJVYEclSMPE	Y	Politics
138	Feb 20, 2025	Why did Trump Lie about Zelensky?	https://youtu.be/_etB3c3qOLI	Y	Politics
139	Feb 24, 2025	Why Some Celebrities Support Russia (and Why It Matters)	https://youtu.be/HLchCS4OOjA	Y	Politics
140	Mar 1, 2025	I Cracked Unbreakable Encryption with a Single Image	https://youtu.be/nvwA88Hoegk	Y	Technology
141	Mar 2, 2025	Are WE The Baddies?	https://youtu.be/hTm0of2znlE	Y	Politics
142	Mar 5, 2025	Rome's 'Weak Hand' Won a War—Can Ukraine Do the Same?	https://youtu.be/m-QXz9wotrU	Y	Politics
143	Mar 7, 2025	US Intelligence Support for Ukraine: The Pause That Could Change Everything	https://youtu.be/GX0VGRzXHSA	Y	Politics

144	Mar 10, 2025	Innovative Solutions to Shipbuilding's Biggest Problems	https://youtu.be/zQYl6dJQWKk	Y	Politics
145	Mar 12, 2025	America's Betrayal: The Real Story Behind Ukraine's Crisis	https://youtu.be/TuNHJGozE6U	Y	Politics
146	Mar 22, 2025	RECAP - American's Secret Weapon Against China	https://youtu.be/Z07GMArmAGg	Y	Politics
147	Mar 24, 2025	Chinese GPS Chips in Russian Weapons and why the US is to Blame	https://youtu.be/iB2nGjULHso	Y	Politics
148	Mar 28, 2025	Are Drones About to Replace Helicopters?	https://youtu.be/hXnr23WBoN4	Y	Politics
149	Apr 5, 2025	Inside the Chinese Army: PLA Ground Forces Explained	https://youtu.be/idaSfpD1pBI	N	Education
150	Apr 10, 2025	Tesla Owners Doxxed - How DOGEquest did it	https://youtu.be/DSkPqJlvRVY	Y	Societal issues – alleged crime, investigation

Friendlyjordies

n: 375

Public interest topic?

Yes: 240 (64%)

No: 135 (36%)

Public interest topics: n 240

Environment: 35 (14.5%)

Politics: 135 (56.25%)

Societal issues: 65 (27%)

Economics: 5 (2.1%)

Non-public interest topics: n135

Comedy: 91 (67.3%)

Personal: 40 (30%)

Education: 1 (0.7%)

History: 3 (2%)

#	Date	Video name	Link	PI topic? Y/N	**Main Topic**/ Additional notes
1	Sep 3, 2020	Visiting Koalas before they are KILLED	https://youtu.be/QfVLsAzr50I	Y	**Environment** / Port Stephens, Koalas
2	Sep 4, 2020	I Trigger A Young Liberal	https://youtu.be/XIfxx6jPhiw	Y	Politics
3	Sep 9, 2020	Mcdonald's - The Final Word	https://youtu.be/mjH0gux_3iE	N	Comedy
4	Sep 11, 2020	We Have Good News	https://youtu.be/QpzFHztwLdE	Y	Environment - Port Stephens, Koalas,

5	Sep 14, 2020	bruz	https://youtu.be/ihoirTYqf2c	Y	Politics – Environment also. Slight edit due to settlement agreement (Barilaro v Shanks-M). The Kosciuszko National Park feral horses.
6	Sep 16, 2020	I Broke the Government	https://youtu.be/3sW4G9-TPF8	Y	Environment - Koala politics
7	Sep 18, 2020	I'm on the news	https://youtu.be/YlPKxWNG01I	N	Personal - Response to media coverage of FJ
8	Sep 20, 2020	Hello, do you wanna play a game	https://youtu.be/tokRGmkGxKk	N	Personal
9	Sep 21, 2020	Dumb Journalist calls me, instantly regrets it	https://youtu.be/5CZkLG2nguM	N	Personal
10	Sep 23, 2020	The Project's WORST Segment Ever	https://youtu.be/ATRgpxjzX4M	Y	Environment – fact checking
11	Sep 25, 2020	The Media is AWESOME	https://youtu.be/NR67gwv7Gns	Y	Politics
12	Sep 28, 2020	Planting more trees than Mr. Beast	https://youtu.be/4QXCzXjrZF0	Y	Environment
13	Sep 30, 2020	'journalist' attacks me, he shouldn't have	https://youtu.be/T_bnLaxUrtE	N	Personal
14	Oct 2, 2020	I'm Scared	https://youtu.be/yCjW_jkmzxE	Y	Environment
15	Oct 5, 2020	Shut Up About Adani!	https://youtu.be/-eGvgiRQXSE	Y	Politics -
16	Oct 7, 2020	How Smear Campaigns Work	https://youtu.be/RTphssOcaPg	Y	Politics
17	Oct 9, 2020	This Turns Me Into Colbert!	https://youtu.be/p7iZDNVO7Y4	Y	Politics

18	Oct 12, 2020	A Day in the Life of Mum	https://youtu.be/8gFO1wMzE80	N	Comedy
19	Oct 14, 2020	#GuiltyGladys	https://youtu.be/q1muY4gEqCE	Y	Politics
20	Oct 16, 2020	KEVIN 2020	https://youtu.be/c7qYf8V7q0k	Y	Politics – interview with Kevin Rudd
21	Oct 19, 2020	bruz returns	https://youtu.be/6Uwi3IbxX9E	N	Personal - trailer
22	Oct 20, 2020	bruzboard	https://youtu.be/Di-8OMfD3UQ	Y	Politics
23	Oct 21, 2020	Secret Dictatorship	https://youtu.be/4AiYvpe6qfs	Y	Politics - Narrandera, political integrity
24	Oct 23, 2020	SUPER BARILARO KART	https://youtu.be/wlz9lo3U1b4	N	Comedy
25	Oct 26, 2020	a video about Coles	https://youtu.be/84WyDvnDqt0	N	Comedy
26	Oct 28, 2020	Game Plan	https://youtu.be/rlDZcmKZ8Kk	Y	Politics – QLD elections
27	Oct 30, 2020	Return of the Boomer	https://youtu.be/MDxf5dWF2Q4	N	Personal – reacting to a video about FJ
28	Nov 1, 2020	Win	https://youtu.be/dY86XkxQUPA	Y	Politics – QLD election
29	Nov 2, 2020	I made an OnlyFans	https://youtu.be/L-5uePhcg_M	N	Personal
30	Nov 4, 2020	DEEP-SEA REVIEW	https://youtu.be/bqbLkhTIR9k	N	Comedy
31	Nov 4, 2020	My 2020 Election Analysis	https://youtu.be/CS5Z6Bvkb34	Y	Politics – USA election

32	Nov 6, 2020	poopoo head	https://youtu.be/DeQo_S0EHhA	Y	Politics
33	Nov 9, 2020	Drunk Aussies caught by Highway Patrol	https://youtu.be/uov0Tk3Vxzw	N	Comedy
34	Nov 11, 2020	Turkmenistan - World's strangest country	https://youtu.be/emp1raZxu6o	N	Personal
35	Nov 13, 2020	I want to kiss TRUMP	https://youtu.be/hXI8yJC3MVk	Y	Politics - USA
36	Nov 18, 2020	Every Ad Break in Aussie Country Towns	https://youtu.be/VmQy4cVWumk	N	Comedy
37	Nov 20, 2020	Friendlyjordies is Cancelled (for real)	https://youtu.be/b6JsM4z-wzk	N	Personal
38	Nov 23, 2020	Tradies	https://youtu.be/lldCev57BNE	N	Comedy
39	Nov 25, 2020	The Italian Job	https://youtu.be/Pgy_FblYNh4	Y	Societal issue - crime
40	Nov 27, 2020	How to Solve a Problem Like friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/KXpRVZB-Yh4	N	Personal
41	Dec 2, 2020	Greek Neighbours	https://youtu.be/DXn62lUCIXo	N	Comedy
42	Dec 4, 2020	SPEED CAMERAS	https://youtu.be/6A1uAcIfHTI	Y	Politics
43	Dec 7, 2020	Help Me Help You	https://youtu.be/tICfF7w2VT4	N	Personal
44	Dec 9, 2020	What I wish I knew at 20	https://youtu.be/gwVzQxX1Rjg	N	Education
45	Dec 11, 2020	Pure Evil	https://youtu.be/G-hVKLydyK4	Y	Politics

46	Dec 14, 2020	Media CEO Responds to me...	https://youtu.be/LzB2cn1-Fm8	N	Personal
47	Dec 16, 2020	Aussie Xmas Gift Guide!	https://youtu.be/EgJI5Pp1Wvw	N	Comedy
48	Dec 18, 2020	Good for Nothing	https://youtu.be/NPoLNYI1eFg	Y	Politics
49	Dec 21, 2020	Highway Patrol Is HILARIOUS	https://youtu.be/LYVjfaMHspc	N	Comedy
50	Dec 24, 2020	thank you and good night	https://youtu.be/HIqtcyh1nTU	N	Personal – reviewing results of advocacy campaigns by FJ
51	Dec 26, 2020	Lazy Scott	https://youtu.be/Hot7JrUffM0	Y	Politics
52	Jan 1, 2021	Jack Lang - The Greatest Australian of All Time	https://youtu.be/cv8yAYlYkBI	N	History
53	Jan 8, 2021	Anti-Mask Freakouts!	https://youtu.be/Ite01f4LKjs	N	Comedy
54	Jan 11, 2021	Is the Middle Class a thing	https://youtu.be/4OJC2tdFGhU	N	Comedy
55	Jan 13, 2021	Is it Legal to Storm the US Capitol	https://youtu.be/KfoTVC5q8Q8	Y	Politics
56	Jan 15, 2021	I'm the Worst Person in Australia	https://youtu.be/NkYzCPzD9ts	N	Personal
57	Jan 18, 2021	Covid Small Talk	https://youtu.be/6HT4__aq8j0	N	Comedy
58	Jan 22, 2021	Australian Psycho	https://youtu.be/FUF9x8A3ITk	Y	Politics - McBride
59	Jan 25, 2021	Common Sense Meme Review	https://youtu.be/KwPr_6V-P3s	N	Comedy

60	Jan 27, 2021	I HATE MUSIC! 😔😡	https://youtu.be/gOqd8gJvzrk	N	Comedy
61	Jan 29, 2021	Craig Kelly Hates Australia	https://youtu.be/FsJi2A5JxgU	Y	Politics - Video made private
62	Feb 1, 2021	Trisha Paytas - The Final Verdict	https://youtu.be/yyDBkDSky7Q	N	Comedy
63	Feb 3, 2021	The Strange World of Doomer Cuisine	https://youtu.be/1MuZ71wM14Y	N	Comedy
64	Feb 5, 2021	The $80million Pickpocketer	https://youtu.be/pNXV6k2Rojo	Y	Environment - water
65	Feb 8, 2021	Aussie Chad DESTROYS the British Empire!	https://youtu.be/ehMK2E3AhBU	N	Comedy
66	Feb 10, 2021	Albo gets ROLLED	https://youtu.be/3eGRez5h_Oc	N	Comedy
67	Feb 12, 2021	Australia's Rivers of Blood	https://youtu.be/pINHLYx02O0	Y	Environment - Regional. Water
68	Feb 15, 2021	Why I hate QandA	https://youtu.be/6szyHsnTlF4	Y	Societal issues – media critique
69	Feb 17, 2021	McLaren 720s Spider Review	https://youtu.be/OXTYYBvB8PE	N	Comedy
70	Feb 19, 2021	Facebook OBLITERATES Australian Media.	https://youtu.be/9l7SNbGzG4Q	Y	Societal issues – media industry, FB stopping news on the platform
71	Feb 22, 2021	The Bait and Switch	https://youtu.be/FX3aMF79Meo	Y	Politics
72	Feb 24, 2021	I Snuck Into Craig Kelly's House	https://youtu.be/tDfmbjrpbaY	Y	Politics – Video made private
73	Feb 26, 2021	Australian Media = Scum	https://youtu.be/Bw8Maxdfya8	Y	Societal issue – media analysis

74	Mar 1, 2021	UwU I'm Literally Dying (◡ ω ◡)	https://youtu.be/FFN2NKiewEU	Y	Environment – endangered species
75	Mar 3, 2021	MAFS - It's back...	https://youtu.be/3KVB4UIJZX4	N	Comedy
76	Mar 5, 2021	Dictator Scomo	https://youtu.be/RfXj3tqeVpg	Y	Politics
77	Mar 8, 2021	A Current Affair - Australia's Funniest Show	https://youtu.be/aBSZ-vOnscU	N	Comedy
78	Mar 10, 2021	MAFS - Hell On Earth!	https://youtu.be/7TWuXRx2bP0	N	Comedy
79	Mar 12, 2021	Union Thug EXPOSED— Bill Shorten Interview	https://youtu.be/FAViGQTTGJU	Y	Politics – interview with Bill Shorten
80	Mar 14, 2021	You Have To See This...	https://youtu.be/4wL_FBK7RPg	N	Personal
81	Mar 15, 2021	All Hail God Emperor McGowan!	https://youtu.be/ANbG67vUgXs	Y	Politics
82	Mar 17, 2021	Why Do People Watch 'Married at First Sight'	https://youtu.be/oLpflT8-tF0	N	Comedy
83	Mar 19, 2021	Kevin Rudd Calmly Dismantles Low IQ Senators	https://youtu.be/L6rQdmN83cw	Y	Politics
84	Mar 22, 2021	Politician Actually Calls the Cops On Me!	https://youtu.be/1OH4hB7opCo	N	Personal
85	Mar 24, 2021	MAFS - The Catfights Begin	https://youtu.be/NbxBtMVFYWI	N	Comedy
86	Mar 26, 2021	SCOVID	https://youtu.be/-pn-7uXKjg0	Y	Politics

87	Mar 29, 2021	Drunks caught on RBT = Aussie Legends	https://youtu.be/MRh6RILYgIA	N	Comedy
88	Mar 31, 2021	MAFS is too long. I'm here to help.	https://youtu.be/j24C-XXkzoQ	N	Comedy
89	Apr 2, 2021	Let's talk about what's happening in Canberra.	https://youtu.be/qf8fPJqQcQU	Y	Politics
90	Apr 5, 2021	We Made Jellied Eel... It Was Delicious.	https://youtu.be/ybW30mkmI0c	N	Comedy
91	Apr 7, 2021	Top 10 Ghibli Movies	https://youtu.be/uDTd7dm9RZc	N	Comedy
92	Apr 9, 2021	ScoMao	https://youtu.be/XpjdR5eedzw	Y	Politics
93	Apr 12, 2021	Triple J Hack - Unbelievably Awful	https://youtu.be/gJaeWDNEKUM	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
94	Apr 14, 2021	Everybody Hates Scomo	https://youtu.be/Xnw1z-zemmY	N	Comedy
95	Apr 16, 2021	Cancel Culture KILLS Artists (Yours and Owls)	https://youtu.be/yx47B5a8zK0	Y	Societal issue – culture
96	Apr 21, 2021	Spanian - King of the Lads	https://youtu.be/Yujj72iSxxk	Y	Societal issue – culture and celebrity. Interview with Spanian
97	Apr 23, 2021	Kevin Rudd RELOADED	https://youtu.be/2G0QVGglBHM	Y	Politics
98	Apr 28, 2021	7 News = God Tier News	https://youtu.be/rbCYFJC39b8	N	Comedy
99	Apr 30, 2021	Twitter Addicts END Friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/KCbLdtoXZxI	N	Personal

100	May 3, 2021	bruz - eternal	https://youtu.be/kUhNFSyHGyE	N	Personal, about getting letter from Barilaro threatening court action. Video removed for violating YouTube's terms of service.
101	May 7, 2021	Deconstructing Propaganda with Kevin Rudd	https://youtu.be/Vs1n-pCycA8	Y	Societal issue – media analysis. With Kevin Rudd
102	May 12, 2021	High School Heroes part 4	https://youtu.be/aaD3vLXHVyA	N	Comedy
103	May 14, 2021	BruzFires	https://youtu.be/ftyFRhLP1Qg	Y	Politics, Regional
104	May 17, 2021	Sky News - Common Sense OVERLOAD	https://youtu.be/zuXdl69iUS4	N	Comedy
105	May 19, 2021	Lynx Review	https://youtu.be/DWScT7nPd1g	N	Comedy
106	May 21, 2021	Sky News STRIKES Back!	https://youtu.be/byRy_z-dWWM	N	Comedy
107	May 24, 2021	Eyes Wide Shut	https://youtu.be/awUhgOou6_Q	Y	Politics - Geoblocked due to privacy complaint. Unblocked at some point
108	May 28, 2021	Blue Checks - The Worst People On Earth	https://youtu.be/dchrP9sFGtE	N	Comedy
109	May 31, 2021	The Lawsuit Begins	https://youtu.be/uSxaKlmng74	N	Personal
110	Jun 2, 2021	Depop Drama	https://youtu.be/1M9Mkr7jDsc	N	Comedy
111	Jun 3, 2021	We Called John Barilaro's Lawyer	https://youtu.be/5mFx8qnS3HE	N	Personal

112	Jun 4, 2021	Lawyer CALMLY DISMEMBERS Me.	https://youtu.be/VwgeMaYOBok	N	Personal
113	Jun 14, 2021	arrested	https://youtu.be/OXtq4a8829g	N	Personal
114	Jul 12, 2021	Blood Water - the war for Australia's water	https://youtu.be/glgCA9WmqkI	Y	Environment. Regional. Water. Indigenous representation X2.
115	Jul 16, 2021	The Death of Free Speech in Australia	https://youtu.be/3RVJrr16NZo	Y	Politics – discussing regulation
116	Jul 19, 2021	Why You're Not Vaccinated...	https://youtu.be/gE0Xf3cHJ58	Y	Politics
117	Jul 21, 2021	Spanian - The Next Chopper Read	https://youtu.be/dkgE9nF0PlY	N	Comedy
118	Jul 23, 2021	Public Enemy Number 1	https://youtu.be/5cWfvErKoWk	Y	Environment – Koalas and relevant koala policy
119	Jul 26, 2021	The Worst STRIP CLUBS in Australia	https://youtu.be/DSZpKRPjfnA	N	Comedy
120	Jul 28, 2021	consequences	https://youtu.be/L-6JtWRVxHQ	Y	Politics
121	Jul 30, 2021	Lockdowns - Gulag Gladys Vs Dictator Dan	https://youtu.be/fO1XV7SvWcg	Y	Politics
122	Aug 2, 2021	Every Aussie Auction	https://youtu.be/dtbminEAR2A	N	Comedy
123	Aug 4, 2021	Go Woke Go Broke	https://youtu.be/9IHWhVR9DXY	N	Comedy
124	Aug 6, 2021	Vote for us or we'll kill you	https://youtu.be/ySXphrwN1LY	Y	Politics
125	Aug 9, 2021	A Current Affair - Big Picture Issues!	https://youtu.be/NcYVqkL8oJE	N	Comedy

126	Aug 11, 2021	Australia is becoming a Police State	https://youtu.be/8mmgeQ6SCqI	Y	Politics
127	Aug 13, 2021	Scott Morrison is sick.	https://youtu.be/th_6wT_BVCk	Y	Politics
128	Aug 16, 2021	He's Destroying Australia	https://youtu.be/JHMi--hJGqc	Y	Environment – NSW policies around environment
129	Aug 18, 2021	The Government is hiding this from you	https://youtu.be/hyhk3-IGs8U	Y	Environment – pollution, ecosystems
130	Aug 20, 2021	She's Trying to Blame YOU for Lockdown	https://youtu.be/DAQW0EuFCM4	Y	Politics
131	Aug 23, 2021	The Slow Death of Sydney	https://youtu.be/UmWlSfswRzI	Y	Societal issues – Life in Sydney issues
132	Aug 27, 2021	Who set the Terror Police on friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/uk4XR6lsQ3o	Y	Societal issue – crime and policing
133	Sep 1, 2021	They. Don't. Care.	https://youtu.be/8lQR6cHk4pc	y	Politics – Regional, Indigenous
134	Sep 2, 2021	Police grilled over friendlyjordies arrest	https://youtu.be/LGlUhmIpfKI	Y	Societal issue – crime and policing
135	Sep 5, 2021	Hey Big Spender _ Craig Kelly _ United Australia Party _ Clive Palmer _ UAP	https://youtu.be/x77MFxDkmMY	Y	Politics
136	Sep 6, 2021	Waleed Aly - Massive Hypocrite	https://youtu.be/l8WqaEMvDEo	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
137	Sep 8, 2021	Can we SAVE koalas	https://youtu.be/gNvKShhPK1Y	Y	Environment
138	Sep 10, 2021	The Police State is Here.	https://youtu.be/U49pq-Ctf_A	Y	Politics

139	Sep 13, 2021	Corruption at Every Level	https://youtu.be/2mbt8QZpgQk	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoing, local gov
140	Sep 15, 2021	Kerser vs Triple J	https://youtu.be/Z_w_c4JVco8	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
141	Sep 17, 2021	Sky News Host Attacks Friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/4ETu9QHJIGM	N	Personal
142	Sep 20, 2021	The Dumb Reason Our Cities are Crumbling	https://youtu.be/hpiOzlN-QFg	Y	Societal issue – housing developing quality
143	Sep 22, 2021	What a #Tool	https://youtu.be/S3HTDChrecE	Y	Politics
144	Sep 24, 2021	Stop Playing Pokies... You Idiot	https://youtu.be/_WDK5PByQgM	Y	Social issue – gambling
145	Sep 29, 2021	War with China	https://youtu.be/jEt9uxuKje8	Y	Politics
146	Oct 1, 2021	Covid's Biggest Hypocrites	https://youtu.be/9XozVsW_yUI	Y	Politics
147	Oct 1, 2021	Gladys Berejiklian Resigns.	https://youtu.be/gJBNX2Vzdrk	Y	politics
148	Oct 4, 2021	John Barilaro Resigns.	https://youtu.be/_0tMDqWe7wQ	Y	Politics
149	Oct 4, 2021	bruz - exodus	https://youtu.be/c3oGlbbLfFs	Y	Politics
150	Oct 4, 2021	Allegations of Misconduct	https://youtu.be/aJX35NXDFqc	Y	Societal issues – alleged wrongdoing , Informant
151	Oct 11, 2021	Craig Kelly - Controlled Opposition	https://youtu.be/O-aXvVtEQas	Y	Politics
152	Oct 12, 2021	Terror Police Attempt to Ban My Videos	https://youtu.be/TNJQLn8LU5g	N	Personal

153	Oct 19, 2021	Dam!	https://youtu.be/n6xCu2vgjfc	Y	Environment
154	Oct 22, 2021	NSW Police - Utterly Compromised	https://youtu.be/iKO1lxfzQA4	Y	Societal issue – crime and police
155	Oct 25, 2021	Cult of Gladys Berejiklian	https://youtu.be/O0KcHGNV3LE	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
156	Oct 29, 2021	Australia VS Google	https://youtu.be/DBZYEoDbj6g	Y	Politics
157	Oct 30, 2021	Police Try to Justify friendlyjordies Arrest	https://youtu.be/5CxSBHmAylQ	Y	Politics – recording of NSW parliament inquiry
158	Nov 2, 2021	AG Questioned Over Police Targeting friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/lcKBDveFXCU	Y	Politics – incl recordings of NSW parliament inquiry
159	Nov 5, 2021	Terror Police Finally Exposed	https://youtu.be/94hb_xFJmB8	Y	Politics – incl recordings of NSW parliament inquiry
160	Nov 19, 2021	bruz - withdrawal	https://youtu.be/lxgglc8ft8Q	N	Personal
161	Nov 22, 2021	WINNING	https://youtu.be/527bT4ZDUBA	N	Personal – advocacy
162	Nov 24, 2021	Liberals Love Corruption	https://youtu.be/I_rTFRLqM6U	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoing
163	Nov 26, 2021	Catholic Conspiracy...	https://youtu.be/RYHTcvgfoKg	Y	Politics
164	Nov 29, 2021	Lower Than Scum	https://youtu.be/Ypj8eYeymns	Y	Politics - property developers
165	Dec 1, 2021	Spanian - The Interview	https://youtu.be/Q2amQRroj_0	Y	Societal issue – culture and celebrity
166	Dec 3, 2021	How to Steal a City	https://youtu.be/mHREavxZ_bo	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoing

167	Dec 6, 2021	friendlyjordies - Enemy To Women	https://youtu.be/yNfxY9UzEek	Y	Politics
168	Dec 8, 2021	Murdoch Goes Green	https://youtu.be/LlBKxQ1cqto	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
169	Dec 10, 2021	The Greatest Threat to Australia's Freedoms	https://youtu.be/arvIFNY4V5s	Y	Politics
170	Dec 13, 2021	Luxe - Insane Aussie Real-Estate	https://youtu.be/IO5Z5TlLqIg	N	Comedy
171	Dec 15, 2021	Australia's Most Evil Corporation	https://youtu.be/I2AtEp4Ncw4	Y	Environment – critique of Lendlease and it environment impact
172	Dec 17, 2021	Australia's Strangest Law feat. Spanian	https://youtu.be/BYsXCnxbnj0	Y	Societal issue – culture and celebrity, interview with Spanian
173	Dec 20, 2021	Bring Assange Home.	https://youtu.be/IW76jeMseUE	Y	Politics
174	Dec 22, 2021	👅	https://youtu.be/OCVUifdPFIQ	Y	Politics. Video “not available on this country domain due to a legal complaint.” See Barilaro v Google. Geoblock done sometime 1H 2022. Unblocked at some point
175	Jan 10, 2022	The Biggest RAT in Australia	https://youtu.be/m-niugQsMZE	Y	Politics
176	Jan 17, 2022	friendlyjordies Attacks Labor	https://youtu.be/8n7yjc867eE	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoing. Local council issues, Strathfield
177	Jan 21, 2022	It's Now Illegal to Criticise the Government	https://youtu.be/blLTd0Smlqk	Y	Politics
178	Jan 28, 2022	Australia: Ruled by Extremists	https://youtu.be/dxJvUkZUnrI	Y	Politics

179	Feb 4, 2022	ROME: TOTAL CORRUPTION	https://youtu.be/VIiRFz11Ki4	N	History
180	Feb 9, 2022	How to Stop them Before they Destroy Australia	https://youtu.be/pGvmm7JVg_4	Y	politics
181	Feb 11, 2022	Brave Woman VS Free-Speech	https://youtu.be/z3V5AzeVRRg	Y	Politics
182	Feb 14, 2022	NSW Police: Politician Protection Racket	https://youtu.be/_-YCtwxVT0M	Y	Societal issue – crime and policing
183	Feb 16, 2022	Pedestrian: A PUNISHMENT	https://youtu.be/6yynzh0Gl7I	N	Personal
184	Feb 18, 2022	Scott Morrison's 60 Minutes HUMILIATION	https://youtu.be/6Jj9rcHD-FM	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
185	Feb 21, 2022	BEES!	https://youtu.be/S9QsnK6zdN8	Y	Environment – pollution, bees
186	Feb 23, 2022	Married at First Sight: BIGGER AND BETTER	https://youtu.be/yVdAKmnvNwc	N	Comedy
187	Feb 25, 2022	Scomo's Political Trainwreck	https://youtu.be/2M6uNZm56bo	Y	Politics
188	Feb 28, 2022	Liberal: Making you Infertile	https://youtu.be/jbAga_z1an8	Y	Environment – pollution, policies around these issues.
189	Mar 2, 2022	MAFS: Setting the Trap	https://youtu.be/2LJaRcAeYwU	N	Comedy
190	Mar 4, 2022	The Baddest MP: Dutton	https://youtu.be/aIGKCkS01EA	Y	Politics - Political integrity/ crime
191	Mar 9, 2022	Kevin Rudd Exposes Scomo's Dirty Tricks	https://youtu.be/EwXdjwq0MF8	Y	Politics – interview with Kevin Rudd
192	Mar 10, 2022	Kristo's Charges Dropped	https://youtu.be/HOFBXq_1ocg	N	Personal

193	Mar 14, 2022	Media Climate Lies Revealed	https://youtu.be/VF_OkBwVcFY	Y	Environment – fact checking
194	Mar 15, 2022	fixated	https://youtu.be/f83qfSV16i4	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrong doing. This FJ investigation led to nsw gov inquiry
195	Mar 17, 2022	Consequences for Police after friendlyjordies Arrest?	https://youtu.be/B4tOwF4ilfg	Y	Politics - recording from nsw parliament
196	Mar 18, 2022	Floods: Worse Than You Thought	https://youtu.be/jszVhNxAs0k	Y	Environment – flood, Regional
197	Mar 23, 2022	Time for Some Answers	https://youtu.be/AvC906uXiLM	Y	Politics – recording from nsw parliament
198	Mar 25, 2022	The Project Has Done it Again	https://youtu.be/ZYSoE18Ue2k	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
199	Mar 29, 2022	Robbing Us Blind	https://youtu.be/O8ZhbsYnswM	Y	Economics
200	Mar 30, 2022	Scomo Destroyed by his own Senator	https://youtu.be/9slD6GY4Ue0	Y	Politics
201	Apr 1, 2022	Naughty Karl Takes Aim at Albo	https://youtu.be/b-AC3Vdu6mk	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
202	Apr 4, 2022	the prayer room	https://youtu.be/X55baVi4p4Y	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoing Video geo-blocked by Google due to defamation complaint. Is available on friendlyjordies website.
203	Apr 7, 2022	Luxe: This House Blows my Mind	https://youtu.be/xGQqG7MVQ0E	N	Comedy
204	Apr 8, 2022	Struggling with Rent? Buy a House!	https://youtu.be/UjPpAjQzWsM	Y	Economics – housing market and related federal policies

205	Apr 10, 2022	The Election Has Been Called	https://youtu.be/2W_zCdWYFfE	Y	Politics
206	Apr 12, 2022	What Australia's Thinking Right Now	https://youtu.be/sCAvey9SDkg	N	Comedy
207	Apr 15, 2022	Brainwashed by the Media	https://youtu.be/vvbIk0P8-z8	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
208	Apr 18, 2022	How to Vote!	https://youtu.be/Nn18MwWj8Xc	Y	Politics
209	Apr 20, 2022	Scott Morrison: Compulsive Liar	https://youtu.be/KL3enIeUeW0	Y	Politics
210	Apr 22, 2022	The Media Hates This Man	https://youtu.be/U4oAMiqdHuA	Y	Politics
211	Apr 26, 2022	Scomo's Government: Most Corrupt Ever	https://youtu.be/vUg9CAbFH3o	Y	Politics
212	Apr 29, 2022	Talk to a Politician, Get Arrested	https://youtu.be/Czstd6jDIVY	Y	Politics
213	May 2, 2022	He Thinks You're Stupid	https://youtu.be/nsG3jwyQIh0	Y	Politics
214	May 4, 2022	I Paid Celebrities to Make Fun of Scomo	https://youtu.be/0pVOctLikCo	N	Comedy
215	May 6, 2022	Scott Morrison vs Elon Musk	https://youtu.be/agl-Y6qHUjw	Y	Politics
216	May 7, 2022	Strike Force set-up to get friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/troOfZTG9MQ	Y	Politics – basically just a recording of a NSW parliament inquiry that is based on a FJ video
217	May 8, 2022	Kevin Rudd Slams the Media's "Outrageous" Election Coverage	https://youtu.be/e8juJqylmY8	Y	Politics – interview with Kevin Rudd

218	May 11, 2022	Australia: Run by Criminals	https://youtu.be/jtrwaKdcskk	Y	Politics
219	May 13, 2022	This Election is About Freedom	https://youtu.be/94OIlxBizwo	Y	politics
220	May 16, 2022	The Journalist Who Wants Me Arrested	https://youtu.be/lnFblVQkigY	N	Personal
221	May 18, 2022	The Liberal Government	https://youtu.be/SJZrw7PhWds	Y	Politics
222	May 19, 2022	Liberal vs Labor	https://youtu.be/9duYLZmFI0o	Y	Politics
223	May 19, 2022	If you live in Gosford or Penrith WATCH THIS.	https://youtu.be/YWITy7dg70E	Y	Politics
224	May 20, 2022	smoke and mirrors	https://youtu.be/gdNFLrAeJds	Y	Politics
225	May 21, 2022	I CALL THE SHOTS	https://youtu.be/lF1-fxajj0I	N	Comedy
226	May 23, 2022	Labor Wins	https://youtu.be/QRmgCNKnG_c	Y	Politics
227	May 27, 2022	What Now?	https://youtu.be/LcZZBku7cdY	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
228	Jun 2, 2022	Johnny Depp: Global Mic Drop	https://youtu.be/iO00zXSq-sc	Y	Societal issue – culture and celebrity
229	Jun 4, 2022	The Dark Lord Rises	https://youtu.be/IN5Ott25uiY	Y	Politics
230	Jun 10, 2022	Police's YouTube Strike-Force	https://youtu.be/Qdaxoz1UcbM	Y	Politics
231	Jun 15, 2022	Bunnings: Australia's Religion	https://youtu.be/nKrb8pHCilk	N	Comedy

232	Jun 17, 2022	Whose Fault is it?	https://youtu.be/-Dir8Guohng	Y	Economics – Australian energy market
233	Jun 20, 2022	The Big Gamble: Avi Yemini vs PRGuy	https://youtu.be/6W78w5VdEbw	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
234	Jun 22, 2022	The Ultimate Guide to Australia	https://youtu.be/5v5AaKajYlc	N	Comedy
235	Jun 24, 2022	I'm Shocked!	https://youtu.be/rPk59Or9G9w	Y	Politics
236	Jun 24, 2022	PRGuy Unmasked	https://youtu.be/nhDCJ506dhs	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
237	Jun 29, 2022	Sky News Makes me Laugh	https://youtu.be/0-T_ZoowVfo	N	Comedy
238	Jun 30, 2022	Avi Yemini 🤣	https://youtu.be/1cim_2cFmv4	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
239	Jul 1, 2022	This Guy was in Charge of Police!?!	https://youtu.be/Tao52IvfY1o	Y	Politics
240	Jul 4, 2022	Real Estate Agents - Peak Insanity	https://youtu.be/PKdDVubhZhA	N	Comedy
241	Jul 6, 2022	Dave's dinnerz - Blue Pizza REVIEW!	https://youtu.be/vI5qefPqRMo	N	Comedy
242	Jul 8, 2022	I'm Excited!	https://youtu.be/PIQQo0LnN7M	Y	Politics
243	Jul 11, 2022	the legal way to take a life	https://youtu.be/7WanTmD3JBI	Y	Societal issue – alleged wrongdoings, Kristo interviews Troy Stolz with GeoBlocked in Australia due to court order. Since been unblocked.
244	Jul 13, 2022	Finally, Some Bad News!	https://youtu.be/QPnQEprM4zo	Y	Environment – Koalas and their habitat

245	Jul 15, 2022	The Fat Controller	https://youtu.be/B8kSb9K9OA8	Y	Politics
246	Jul 18, 2022	School Cross Country	https://youtu.be/pl4r0s7a8fI	N	Comedy
247	Jul 20, 2022	The Worst POLICE STATIONS in Australia	https://youtu.be/tfc0Tn95lns	N	Comedy
248	Jul 22, 2022	Is Pork Barrelling Corrupt?	https://youtu.be/zQb5sinom88	Y	Societal issue – pork barrelling, corruption
249	Jul 27, 2022	Super Smash Bruz.	https://youtu.be/qcam43_65Fc	Y	Societal issue - crime
250	Jul 29, 2022	Albo: Sigma-Male	https://youtu.be/IUn3iE9JtPM	Y	Environment – esp federal environment policy
251	Aug 1, 2022	How is This Still a Problem?	https://youtu.be/WqNw1BujpFc	Y	Societal issue - Fire Station Closures in regional areas
252	Aug 3, 2022	Destroying Politicians using A.I	https://youtu.be/4uUkq2QG5BQ	N	Comedy
253	Aug 5, 2022	Two Media Giants Ripped Me to Shreds	https://youtu.be/LOEkom6Sez4	N	Personal
254	Aug 8, 2022	“The Unluckiest Man in NSW Politics”	https://youtu.be/GkKTq8JaTuU	Y	Politics
255	11 Aug 2022	Nature is Healing	https://youtu.be/kW2yyfxBCbI	Y	Environment – esp policies around environment
256	17 Aug 2022	Who did this to my face? 🤔	https://youtu.be/W43nXvDsd5Q	Y	Politics
257	20 Aug 2022	Coronation	https://youtu.be/QGpWvYscSpE	Y	Societal issue - crime
258	22 Aug 2022	Super Smash Bruz. Melee (Announcement!)	https://youtu.be/tuFVg-tHYHQ	Y	Societal issue - crime

259	24 Aug 2022	that IS my job - Scott Morrison	https://youtu.be/7vqnVffRjYE	Y	Politics
260	29 Aug 2022	Holding only Them to Account	https://youtu.be/ap7CPqt0V5Y	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
261	1 Sept 2022	Gang "Infiltration" of NSW Politics?	https://youtu.be/NqF8eyKH_YI	Y	Societal issue - crime
262	2 Sept 2022	Waleed Aly: He's at it Again!	https://youtu.be/CcLXdyRoIUw	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
263	5 Sept 2022	I Am Being Criminally Prosecuted	https://youtu.be/FEKze6fXEW4	N	Personal
264	7 Sept 2022	Sucked in Crikey! but...	https://youtu.be/u9uhstHWsw0	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
265	12 Sept 2022	City VS Country in Australia	https://youtu.be/lBCUhnj-3uQ	N	Comedy
266	14 Sept 2022	Labor is Making a Big Mistake	https://youtu.be/BRhg-Ori3qo	Y	Politics – interview with Labor state MP Adam Searle
267	16 Sept 2022	Bruz Runner 2026	https://youtu.be/CZ4NyP_7DzU	Y	Politics
268	19 Sept 2022	Australia's Greatest Unsung Heroes	https://youtu.be/YT6muP73AEs	N	Comedy
269	23 Sept 2022	friendlyjordies goes to court	https://youtu.be/3eNNS6z8tAA	N	Personal
270	26 Sept 2022	Why Does The Project Even Exist?	https://youtu.be/FCW3qVmIMSo	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
271	28 Sept 2022	TikTok: Brain Armageddon	https://youtu.be/ink9vTO5jzs	N	Comedy
272	30 Sept 2022	National Anti-Corruption Commission!	https://youtu.be/lUVBxuKo92w	Y	Politics

273	5 Oct 2022	Sky News Goes Woke	https://youtu.be/hUTBnQO2c2o	Y	Societal issue – media analysis
274	7 Oct 2022	Why I Might Go To Prison	https://youtu.be/U8pyZCdaQ88	Y	Environment – habitat destruction, deforestation
275	10 Oct 2022	The Worst Crime I've Ever Seen	https://youtu.be/5tBzperMySA	Y	Environment
276	12 Oct 2022	Optus Fell Off	https://youtu.be/66RyNWdTPwM	Y	Politics
277	17 Oct 2022	This just got worse	https://youtu.be/FMQiXXCEoQ8	Y	Environment – Habitat destruction, deforestation.
278	19 Oct 2022	Massive Real Estate Scam EXPOSED	https://youtu.be/ps3oMKmiVWE	Y	Societal issue
279	21 Oct 2022	This Journalist Made a Big Mistake	https://youtu.be/PtuxkBmGlEQ	N	Personal – incl list of original investigations by FJ
280	26 Oct 2022	True Stories From Australian Towns: Kidnapped	https://youtu.be/GzDT_hMp8Ew	N	Comedy
281	28 Oct 2022	Sending a Great Man to Prison	https://youtu.be/J0E_m2Ck65A	Y	Crime
282	31 Oct 2022	Australia's Worst Billionaire	https://youtu.be/A-tUvSNwFig	Y	Politics
283	2 Nov 2022	Career Politicians: A Scourge on Society	https://youtu.be/aWB9YBYwUZM	Y	Politics – Includes interview with Labor MLC Mark Buttigieg
284	4 Nov 2022	Anthony Albanese: Enemy to Women?	https://youtu.be/w7GIUFUFtgg	Y	Politics
285	7 Nov 2022	KFC Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/hqg8RehNxTA	N	Comedy

286	9 Nov 2022	The Worst CASH CONVERTERS in Australia	https://youtu.be/NM4DZYkFWVE	N	Comedy
287	11 Nov 2022	You're Going to Hate This	https://youtu.be/XzVpWEnDJ2E	Y	Environment
288	16 Nov 2022	Let Me Be Blunt	https://youtu.be/J8decOIAKWE	Y	Politics
289	18 Nov 2022	Love Island Gives Me Life	https://youtu.be/i382CZb7cZg	N	Comedy
290	21 Nov 2022	THE DEVIL*according to the press	https://youtu.be/b9KFCnFiNnM	Y	Societal issues – media analysis
291	23 Nov 2022	Vic Libs: All You Need to Know	https://youtu.be/ZpOhOfunrSs	Y	Politics
292	23 Nov 2022	My House Was Firebombed	https://youtu.be/ZI3zaHUsgXg	N	Personal – FJ house firebombed. Publishing to YouTube on hold for foreseeable future.
293	25 Nov 2022	Incredulous (Patreon Exclusive)	https://youtu.be/eAenqDqButs	Y	Societal Issue – Media analysis/ critique Unlisted (as of 14-Dec-22), Posted to Patreon, edit unfinished. Said won't be made public.
294 *	2 Dec 2022	Domino's Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/iUB-NU7ZGfQ	N	Comedy - Unlisted (as of 14-Dec-22). FJ said will make public at some point in the future. Eventually made public 3-April-23
295	9 Dec 2022	RTBU Delegate | Nissa Full Interview	https://youtu.be/1UpYpEbk7vg	Y	Politics – Union rep interview. Unlisted (as of 14-Dec-22). FJ said will cut up and include in future public videos.
296 **	16 Dec 2022	Bar Staff Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/yetKi0lpUYM	N	Comedy - Unlisted (as of 16-Dec-22). FJ said will make public at some point in the

					future. Eventually published publicly 8 May
297	Feb 15, 2023	who firebombed friendlyjordies?	https://youtu.be/PF1-1CNggQA?si=cP6MmBTwmom13b2I	N	Personal
298	Mar 1, 2023	How I Avoided Prison	https://youtu.be/4wvy8LZ-XTo?si=syHhI6KQChUCWzbH	N	Personal
299	Mar 6, 2023	Monetising Politics	https://youtu.be/VWZkANkNYo4?si=Jhi1H58l3ZZW1dHN	Y	Politics
300	Mar 10, 2023	you can have it all	https://youtu.be/JRAU4Z9Meb0?si=THYH5xw2TU3KAZaC	Y	Politics - Regional politics. https://www.friendlyjordies.com/post/you-can-have-it-all
301	Mar 15, 2023	Valley of Death	https://youtu.be/fogLmltSZns?si=XTsG_WUi_20YjaNb	Y	Environment – habitat destruction
302	Mar 17, 2023	“I'm Making Foolish Election Commitments"	https://youtu.be/XrJeumZROdU?si=rgetqT-X6cz1jUWS	Y	Politics - Regional politics
303	Mar 22, 2023	A Dangerous Man	https://youtu.be/9VXLP7p5HFw?si=hgHQfpgXfAKP-QTJ	Y	Environment – Koala, habitat destruction, environmentalists
304	Mar 24, 2023	GET RID OF THEM	https://youtu.be/v3kx9Os7urw?si=kp3gCRLnShqZvxst	Y	Politics
305	Mar 31, 2023	We Won (1 MILLION SUBS!)	https://youtu.be/4yORMwZQmAA?si=SiEJ9t4bIce-kz9h	Y	Politics – elections (NSW)
294 *	Apr 3, 2023	Domino's Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/iUB-NU7ZGfQ?si=LNUJPWoNpETc7lLY	N	Comedy

306	Apr 6, 2023	I didn't want to make this video	https://youtu.be/Z_jx_zPjCUs?si=M3CQf2CHQG-slG2f	Y	Societal issue - crime
307	Apr 11, 2023	The Worst BIG THINGS in Australia	https://youtu.be/0gacgRUSlsg?si=k8kUk4TGVt3C7r6X	N	Comedy
308	Apr 16, 2023	Housing Crisis - Are We Doomed?	https://youtu.be/UE3B_ra3lY?si=kYXhHgT_ndHScbVj	Y	Economics
309	Apr 19, 2023	Nurses Confess their SINS	https://youtu.be/XtgQy0ai4wk?si=StCkhEgZujcfu2bx	N	Comedy
310	Apr 21, 2023	America SCAMS Australia	https://youtu.be/IOHvB6Fzemk?si=9JsNweTp7SgS9TGZ	Y	Politics - AUKUS
311	Apr 26, 2023	Crikey is Still a Sham	https://youtu.be/NI8qOPP3JT0?si=g52APUBtMDrGjVRr	Y	Societal issue – media analysis/critique
312	Apr 28, 2023	I Need to Get This Off My Chest	https://youtu.be/ndqr6NT8CDk?si=MtRZvUoQL7oSv7dV	Y	Politics
313	May 3, 2023	The Worst 7-ELEVENS in Australia	https://youtu.be/9NG8iXbz1UM?si=BJquQLL4zw6rVjSl	N	Comedy
314	May 5, 2023	This Journalist Is A Mole Rat	https://youtu.be/owq37P1lyro?si=kQ-6XrcwIDt8OXj6	N	Personal
296 **	May 8, 2023	Bar Staff Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/yetKi0lpUYM?si=q_Oz75p6mGyCwN4-	N	Comedy
315	May 15, 2023	I did this Wrong	https://youtu.be/RJGBpy5muPM?si=F610PGxurFK15PiJ	Y	Societal issue – animal rescue

316	May 19, 2023	The NDIS was predatory.	https://youtu.be/2tNTJhJmOkU?si=hdcTw02RHoihHZuM	Y	Politics
317	May 22, 2023	The Media's New Little Propaganda Trick	https://youtu.be/4NORz8IWB9M?si=N2nFBc6RrmvJFU63	Y	Societal Issues – media analysis
318	May 26, 2023	Bruz: The Cover-Up	https://youtu.be/n5LG4TBMLQ0?si=cBBSEZGnNlcAA27W	Y	Politics
319	May 31, 2023	I Don't Know Whether to Laugh or Cry	https://youtu.be/HJ4bkTkvId0?si=S8fISgeHm6CYrHjx	N	Comedy
320	Jun 2, 2023	My Most Unpopular Opinion	https://youtu.be/sTeoI2hOHl0?si=EG0bffzP8__u75I0	Y	Environment
321	Jun 6, 2023	Australia Almost had a Civil War	https://youtu.be/mygy4SbiC3c?si=4l15FokK3u84XDw8	N	History
322	Jun 9, 2023	COST OF LIVING	https://youtu.be/u_ABMxDSukE?si=z5vA43JnEpbxqVMp	Y	Economics
323	Jun 14, 2023	AUSTRALIA'S BEST WORST CITY with Michael Cusack	https://youtu.be/dfG4mZPZRkk?si=YppobtvDJcwE7JCl	Y	Societal issues – culture and celebrity. Interview with Michael Cusack
324	Jun 16, 2023	Housing	https://youtu.be/jV6BprD7toY?si=mbGgvF1nNu5YUmyI	Y	Politics
325	Jun 21, 2023	I.T Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/7l29NMsatfI?si=evRasH2Nn4-3D2hZ	N	Comedy
326	Jun 23, 2023	The Riddler	https://youtu.be/xSCTuCp8pOA?si=PqokzdSD-rEwFR8O	Y	Environment – fact checking

327	Jun 27, 2023	John Barilaro Loses in Court	https://youtu.be/v0dYsF_QVrc?si=dL7NWTEQqMEywM9x	Y	Politics
328	Jun 30, 2023	She is Corrupt	https://youtu.be/UAOkAQ3HrGc?si=e9JhUqTCxU2gQhKv	Y	Politics
329	Jul 3, 2023	The WORST Schools in Australia	https://youtu.be/rFy2tDPF0q4?si=0_b5RSwLC8g5oPnS	N	Comedy
330	Jul 7, 2023	Hot Take: I Don't Like War Crimes	https://youtu.be/jaOr174KRCI?si=QFnMjbdYBRtSrdRZ	Y	Societal issues - Crime
331	Jul 12, 2023	Cleaner's HORROR STORIES	https://youtu.be/-L8CBQZndPo	N	Comedy
332	Jul 19, 2023	friendlyjordies LIVE SHOW	https://youtu.be/AxFALowh4wk	N	Comedy
333	Jul 24, 2023	Meet Australia's Puppet Master	https://youtu.be/dvLbbYB75r8	Y	Politics
334	Aug 4, 2023	Paradise Bombed	https://youtu.be/nSf3268tAbg	Y	Politics
335	Aug 11, 2023	Pyramid Scheme	https://youtu.be/W047z1RUvYE	Y	Politics
336	Aug 14, 2023	Bro, Just Leave.	https://youtu.be/b-U7bABbMGQ	Y	Politics
337	Aug 17, 2023	Hurry Up!	https://youtu.be/50cV0B6pcII	Y	Environment – deforestation
338	Aug 22, 2023	Plastic!	https://youtu.be/3izZT7TDPws	Y	Environment – new legislation for environmental protections
339	Aug 29, 2023	Scammer Calls the Cops on Me (ft Coffeezilla)	https://youtu.be/0kWPjBmPXIs	Y	Societal issues – crime ft Coffeezilla

340	Sep 5, 2023	friendlyjordies CANCELS THE MEDIA	https://youtu.be/6h4ikeOzdSA	N	Comedy – recording of comedy show
341	Sep 13, 2023	W.	https://youtu.be/cWXarWsg9Rg	Y	Environment - Koala/ environment
342	Sep 18, 2023	They Got Expelled	https://youtu.be/YdmItZl5p6w	N	Comedy
343	Sep 20, 2023	Portrait of a REBEL	https://youtu.be/A64FJX9PLAs	Y	Societal issue – culture and celebrity. Interview with Paul Fenech
344	Sep 25, 2023	They Sent the Riot Squad in	https://youtu.be/h-Oz51c1LI8	Y	Environment – Regional, Koala habitats, environmentalist
345	Sep 27, 2023	Scomo's Next Big Move	https://youtu.be/aF7M1zJZLV4	Y	Politics
346	Sep 29, 2023	Pranks That Went Too Far	https://youtu.be/N5wX3bukqPY	N	Comedy
347	Oct 3, 2023	Australia's Worst Airline	https://youtu.be/t0arQRdOY_s	N	Comedy
348	Oct 6, 2023	A Future Without Catastrophe?	https://youtu.be/FP02F3961kU	Y	Politics – interview with Bob Carr
349	Oct 9, 2023	A strange turn of events...	https://youtu.be/D_lulRbRuWA	Y	Politics – the Voice referendum
350	Oct 11, 2023	YouTube Shorts, what a mess...	https://youtu.be/azWEpO0Xdo8	N	Comedy
351	Oct 17, 2023	I Was Sent a Legal Letter	https://youtu.be/7olbKWGmCTk	N	Personal
352	Oct 20, 2023	Yu-Gi-Oh! Players Are F***ED!	https://youtu.be/m3bDC_p1uH8	N	Comedy
353	Oct 23, 2023	(war)Crime and Punishment	https://youtu.be/pyn56yeiaXM	Y	Societal issues - crime

354	Oct 27, 2023	Gun YouTube is CRAZY	https://youtu.be/gQ0CluSTkts	N	Comedy
355	Nov 3, 2023	Bali. Australia's Vegas.	https://youtu.be/fVIThtVZDGM	N	Comedy
356	Nov 6, 2023	BUSHFIRE SEASON Are We Ready?	https://youtu.be/FHJJTBTyBbA	Y	Societal issues - bushfires
357	Nov 8, 2023	21st Birthday Horror Stories	https://youtu.be/t0lGHLjpSzg	N	Comedy
358	Nov 10, 2023	Mechanics Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/kzPThBY-CkI	N	Comedy
359	Nov 13, 2023	Bruz: Legacy	https://youtu.be/_GX6L-ujLhc	Y	Politics
360	Nov 15, 2023	The WORST Bottle-Os in Australia	https://youtu.be/vxwsQU1AqLQ	N	Comedy
361	Nov 17, 2023	Undoing His Legacy	https://youtu.be/twUp9B4pQEk	Y	Politics
362	Nov 20, 2023	The Australian Media's High Horse	https://youtu.be/IXiXr_dt1QA	Y	Politics
363	Nov 24, 2023	YouTube Made me a Conspiracy Theorist	https://youtu.be/bpL9QQwPphk	N	Comedy
364	Nov 27, 2023	Australians Are Poor Now?	https://youtu.be/IGhgyMwTgiQ	Y	Societal issues – cost of living
365	Nov 29, 2023	W: Cost of Living	https://youtu.be/KMHv-hxlT2E	Y	Societal issues – cost of living
367	Dec 1, 2023	Bottle Shop Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/w82LvN5Gi9o	N	Comedy
368	Dec 4, 2023	Guilty	https://youtu.be/d3BGUl7X9mg	Y	Politics

369	Dec 8, 2023	UBER/TAXI Drivers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/SiWRMUXIRR4	N	Comedy
370	Dec 11, 2023	Manufacturing Dissent	https://youtu.be/__8gZEp8bZ0	Y	Politics
371	Dec 13, 2023	Queensland Has A New Premier	https://youtu.be/qbB0ZdmyBUw	Y	Politics – QLD election
372	Dec 18, 2023	The Peter Files	https://youtu.be/lSol_OuPJ5k	Y	Politics
373	Dec 20, 2023	Airline Workers Confess Their SINS	https://youtu.be/k93Xhla_uSg	N	Comedy
374	Dec 22, 2023	Somebody Got Arrested	https://youtu.be/x8AN5kPtnm4	N	Personal – channel update, channel going on break because of firebomber arrest
375	Feb 1, 2024	statement from friendlyjordies	https://youtu.be/PRqUVh29LGQ	N	Personal – Statement about firebomber arrest.

Punter's Politics

n = 59

Public interest topics?

Yes: 54 (91.5%)

No: 5 (8.5%)

Public interest topics: n 54

Politics: 38

Economics: 11

Societal issues: 5

Non-public interest topics: n 5

Personal: 5

#	Date	Video name	Link	PI Topic? Y/N	Main topic/ additional notes
1	Mar 25, 2025	I Put THIS Billboard Outside Gas Corporation' HQ (They Weren't Happy) | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/CI46vQxT5vQ	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
2	Mar 31, 2025	PROOF: They Spent $100k of YOUR Money to Hide THIS | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/3LOifAptGtA	Y	Politics: resources policy
3	Apr 4, 2025	Sky News is spreading LIES about how your vote works, and I'm sick of it.	https://youtu.be/Nr3mipPL6Jw	Y	Politics: Elections, media fact checking
4	Apr 15, 2025	Gas Execs TRIGGERED by Punters' Billboards | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/37KrZmgxdCw	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
5	Apr 22, 2025	I TROLLED Canberra With A Billboard Truck — Here's What Happened | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/QCEZ0_Uqozl	Y	Politics: resources & mining tax policy

6	Apr 28, 2025	How NOT To Vote Like An Idiot | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/Dj26Jf4f0Cs	Y	Politics: elections
7	May 1, 2025	Liberal & Labor are in TROUBLE! | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/sRp45vspFbg	Y	Politics: Elections
8	May 6, 2025	Why You'll NEVER Own A Home | Punters Politics | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/rF7jqs1jOvw	Y	Politics: Housing policy
9	May 13, 2025	I Put Santos' Tax Rate on a BILLBOARD Outside Their Gas Plant | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/9Wm6TzcHF2Q	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
10	May 16, 2025	The REAL Winners of Australia's Election (It's EXACTLY Who You Think) | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/YBNVSGh8MLU	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
11	May 20, 2025	The Privatisation of Australia's Retirement System (That Nobody Cares About) | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/eenjqu3NYeM	Y	Economics: Superannuation
12	May 22, 2025	Australia's Tax System: Designed to Punish Workers? | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/xvqRUYHsryA	Y	Economics: Australian tax system
13	May 26, 2025	Gas Giants, Fake Green Deals, and a $1 Billion Hospital Scam | Punter News	https://youtu.be/iV861ekD5S8	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
14	May 28, 2025	The DEATH of Free Camping in Australia (Can we save it?) | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/QcIiYCjj4g4	Y	Societal issues: Camping fees policy
15	Jun 9, 2025	Australia Just Gave Away $215 Billion... Corporate Media Ignores it | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/qNyDFDNIwik	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
16	Jun 17, 2025	Another Australian Energy SCAM | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/OLb_FlxErGI	Y	Economics: Electricity infrastructure

17	Jun 30, 2025	The Housing Solution Australia Doesn't Want You to Remember | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/I-hA-DbVWv8	Y	Politics: Housing policy
18	Jul 29, 2025	Sky News Guest Paid for by Oil Company | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/wPFYuYYeyc0	Y	Economics: Tax and impacts of major resources companies
19	Jul 31, 2025	Stupidity or Corruption? Australia gives away ANOTHER $500 Million	https://youtu.be/g_OFPfLwii4	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
20	Aug 7, 2025	Who OWNS Australia? | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/La8VYUmmHGM	Y	Societal issues: actions by major corporations
21	Aug 12, 2025	$15K Raised in ONE WEEK - Our Next Big Move	https://youtu.be/W6XDvq034Bw	N	Personal: updates to the channel and channel activities
22	Aug 14, 2025	Gary's Economics on Australia | Punters politics Interview FULL	https://youtu.be/s3Ri7J0709w	Y	Economics: interview with Gary's Economics
23	Aug 19, 2025	Corporate Media FINALLY Admits Australia's Getting Ripped off by Gas Companies | Punters Politics.	https://youtu.be/qLqiO9ZBs78	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
24	Aug 22, 2025	Liberal MP ACCIDENTALLY Reveals Who He Really Works For | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/U9D3dTy57s8	Y	Politics: discussing politician
25	Aug 26, 2025	Stupidity or Corruption? Australia Gives $28M to Industry BANNED in Canada | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/aK8RMEPa3Xg	Y	Politics: critique around environment policy, salmon.
26	Sep 2, 2025	I Asked Government Insiders to NAME Australia's Biggest Tax Bludgers | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/IrUvF0W5O8g	Y	Politics: inside parliament house interviewing people

27	Sep 4, 2025	Reddit User DESTROYS Me on Corporate Tax (And He's Absolutely Right) | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/TUIGbLW8y0Q	Y	Politics: reporting on various federal gov programs
28	Sep 9, 2025	The Video That Made People HATE Me (My Biggest Mistake?)	https://youtu.be/Xr-HvaWl-2w	N	Personal: responding to audience comments
29	Sep 16, 2025	Australia's Perfectly Legal 'Corruption' Problem, Explained | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/hM0B0JUdjA0	Y	Politics: alleged political integrity issues
30	Sep 18, 2025	Why REAL Journalists Think I'm Part of the Problem Now | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/ogQt_20ih4A	N	Personal: responding to critique video from Ette Media
31	Sep 23, 2025	This is Why I CAN'T Trust Politicians...EVER | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/o79VQF5k_r8	Y	Politics: FOI issues
32	Sep 26, 2025	Gas Lobbyist RESPONDS To My Rant In Parliament House | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/R3ymTX4hwuA	Y	Politics: Mining tax policy
33	Sep 30, 2025	The Simple Solution to Australia's Bank problem | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/5C5mnwm_2gc	Y	Societal issues: alleged misconduct in the banking sector
34	Oct 7, 2025	Coincidence or Corruption? The Gas Leak Cover-Up Nobody Talks About | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/nDDrLjxzAZc	Y	Politics: political integrity issues
35	Oct 14, 2025	Watch Penny Wong's Face When Pocock EXPOSES Gambling Connections | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/KYotXzVttSE	Y	Politics: actions and decisions of politicians
36	Oct 21, 2025	The Karen Economy: How Australians Police Each Other for Corporate Profit | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/u1uCaVbe8iE	Y	Politics: corporate tax policy

37	Oct 23, 2025	Australia's Housing Crisis Will Get MUCH Worse! - Who's Really To Blame?	https://youtu.be/LuEaGNXlh1E	Y	Societal issues: housing
38	Oct 28, 2025	This Photo Shows the REAL Reason Australia is Broke | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/8bPukhoXoJo	Y	Politics: political integrity
39	Nov 6, 2025	The Moment a YouTuber Became a Threat to the Liberal Party | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/UD31xwBOLfg	Y	Politics: connections between politicians and large corporations
40	Nov 20, 2025	Your High Bills Aren't an Accident - Here's Who's to Blame | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/7SebC_X-Fuo	Y	Economics: gas supply and gas corporation decisions impacting domestic supply.
41	Nov 27, 2025	I Hosted A $75,000 Dinner To Prove Australian Politics Is Corrupt | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/zu9ExfR_sy4	N	Personal: update about the channel's activities.
42	Dec 1, 2025	Wild Strategy From Netflix: Rely on Aussies NOT Knowing How the Internet Works | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/kEM4WHs8a2o	Y	Economics: Corporate tax issues
43	Dec 4, 2025	Labor Politician Goes ROGUE! Mentions Aussie Gas Rort Out Loud. Media Ignores it | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/jj7RJXyiG0Q	Y	Politics: report on actions and decision of politicians
44	Dec 9, 2025	Australia Briefly Loses Ability to Care About Anything Except a Burqa and a Steak | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/pkeiuo1sijM	Y	Politics: actions of politicians
45	Jan 6, 2026	What Happens IF I Get Sued? "Free Speech" In Australia | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/JAOtx5Ki_D0	Y	Societal issues: freedom of speech
46	Jan 8, 2026	How a Small Group of Wealthy People Shapes	https://youtu.be/0yFKNtpBkv8	Y	Politics: thinktanks and their connection to political parties and corporations.

		What You Think | Punters Politics			
47	Jan 27, 2026	EVERYTHING Spotify Doesn't Want You to Know | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/zCgmS3wkJkM	Y	Economics: music industry, esp. Spotify
48	Feb 3, 2026	International Study PROVES Australian Housing Is A Piss-Take | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/lNZmVyvLJHM	Y	Economics: capital gains tax and housing market
49	Feb 12, 2026	They Sold Our Power Grid for Quick Cash. Now WE'RE Paying | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/Nnj8z3NLoPA	Y	Economics: privatisation and energy generation
50	Feb 17, 2026	ATO Secrets: The $42M Contract they don't want you to read | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/LaiaGc4b8fo	Y	Politics: Decisions by the Australian Tax Office/ outsourcing
51	Feb 19, 2026	They Tried to HIDE This Report... So I read it. | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/3-VDCx1f_N4	Y	Politics: political integrity
52	Feb 26, 2026	The Truth About Our Gas is Out—And the Government is PANICKING | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/zCeTngOFOyo	Y	Politics: corporate tax policy
53	Mar 5, 2026	Wait, WHAT?! Corporate Media Host Karl Stefanovic Accidentally Did His Job | Punters Politics | Punter's Politics	https://youtu.be/n9ipyyCpMVk	Y	Politics: resources tax, reaction video
54	Mar 12, 2026	The Epstein Files Australia Ignored: How US Billionaires Meddle in OUR Democracy | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/NvkXj577F5g	Y	Politics: political integrity
55	Mar 24, 2026	It's Not Just You. Our Politicians Are Actually Getting Worse | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/QmXOmdm_oN8	Y	Politics

56	Mar 26, 2026	She Said The Quiet Part Out Loud. We Got It On Camera | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/7kORb0PIlnY	Y	Politics: report on actions and decision of politicians
57	Mar 31, 2026	Nobody Is Buying THIS Anymore And They Know It | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/S4AIMczZ5aM	Y	Economics: analysis of media reporting on gas supply and market
58	Apr 7, 2026	Spot The Difference: Which Politician Works For You? | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/bFDHAq31FN4	Y	Politics: resources tax policy
59	Apr 14, 2026	I Spent $80,000 to Beat the Gas Cartel at Their Own Game! | Punters Politics	https://youtu.be/wP1H_lozKpA	N	Personal: update of channel activities