

Study of attitudes on digital disruption yields reform call

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Experts say social media platforms need to be more involved in content moderation and to work on better complaints reporting. Credit: Rami Al-Zayat/Unsplash

Most Australians are concerned about their privacy online and are

worried about privacy violations by corporations, according a new University of Sydney report. Nearly half of the respondents to a major survey are also concerned about government invading their privacy. University of Sydney researchers are calling for a number of measures to be taken to improve digital rights in Australia.

1. Address privacy concerns to earn trust

Australian governments need to address concerns about privacy if they want to improve trust in the online environment, and in programs to promote expanded data use both by governments and by corporations.

2. Give Australians more control of their data

The federal government should consider taking up recommendations from recent Australian Law Reform Commission and Australian Productivity Commission inquiries, giving Australians more control over their data and more enforceable legal rights in the area of privacy.

3. Tackle the influence of data analytics

Australians are concerned about use of data, and think that some use of [data analytics](#) and targeting by advertisers are beyond the pale – especially in the electoral sphere. Digital platforms must work harder to address these concerns effectively.

4. Re-assess plans to centralise public data

Australians are prepared to make some trade-offs between privacy and other interests. But current policy moves to collect and centralise more data – through My Health Record or a Digital ID program – look like pushing beyond what Australians are comfortable with.

5. Safeguard private posts from employers

Digital rights to privacy while at work are a major concern for Australians. Employment relations policies need to protect workers from prospective or current employers accessing their private [social media](#) data.

6. Make work fairer for gig economy workers

The gig economy has led to new forms of work, driven by online platforms. Australians expect to see this precarious work better regulated via targeted employment policies.

7. Improve moderation of online discussions

Australians agreed that there should be more regulation of online discussion environments. Social media platforms need to have greater involvement in content moderation and to work with government and citizens to ensure they are providing 'easy', responsive complaints reporting.

8. Explore legal options for harmful speech

As significant numbers of Australians face new forms of risky and harmful speech online, [government](#) needs to explore [law reform](#) to address new [privacy](#) and speech rights breaches.

9. Teach citizens about the digital landscape

Australians need better education in media law, content regulation and public comment guidelines given their social media publishing is increasingly open to public scrutiny.

More information: The report is available online:
[ses.library.usyd.edu.au//bitst ... sAustraliaireport.pdf](https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2152.2/54141/1/sAustraliaireport.pdf)

Provided by University of Sydney

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