DP-REG Digital Technologies Working Group

6 September 2022, 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Attendance:
- ACCC – ███████████████████
- eSafety – ███████████████
- OAIC – ███████████
- ACMA – ███████████ Apologies: ███████████

Minutes prepared by the ACCC

Open Meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and discussions on the minutes of the previous meeting. Subject to one minor change to be incorporated by the ACCC, the minutes were approved.

Action items/Agency updates/Information sharing

ACMA
- ACMA noted a meeting with Google on transparency reporting for misinformation/disinformation.
- ACMA noted that it is a member of a Media Regulation Online Forum (**MORF**) with a number of international regulators that meets once a quarter to discuss online regulation and that this may be a useful forum in the future for the group. Members include regulators from Canada (CRTC), the UK (Ofcom) and Ireland (BAI).
- ACMA noted it recently presented on misinformation/disinformation on ANU national security council.

eSafety
- eSafety noted it sent out Basic Online Safety Expectations (**BOSE)** notices to several digital platforms last week and provided the associated media release.
- eSafety is looking at immersive technology and its impact on young people and children and referred to workshops with project Rockit and Meta.
- eSafety noted an ANU school of cybernetics workshop taking place in Sydney this week.
- eSafety noted a safety in the metaverse week event that will take place later in the year. The format is still to be determined but an invite will be shared.

OAIC
- ███
- OAIC noted the upcoming Global privacy assembly October meeting and that the OAIC will monitor this meeting for relevant developments.
- OAIC noted a special leave hearing in the high court on 16 September in relation to jurisdiction over the American Facebook entity.

ACCC
- ACCC noted that it has shared information relating to some recent international work and upcoming events on the Metaverse with the group since the last meeting. The ACCC will attend upcoming events on the Metaverse and provide an update at the next meeting.
- ACCC noted that social media will be the topic for the sixth interim report of the digital platform services inquiry.

CSIRO/Data 61 session on AI/algorithms

The Chair provided some background on the engagement with the CSIRO. The group agreed to focus on addressing the substance of the work plan before addressing this agenda item (which would discuss possible areas of focus and timing on the engagement with CSIRO).

Work plan

The Chair noted the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the work plan document and noted the intention to provide the draft work plan to the steering committee ahead of its 16 September meeting.

General comments

On general comments, the group discussed various issues, including the framing of the work plan, the inclusion of a terms of reference, measuring success and assigning leads to workstream. The Chair noted an action item to create a short terms of reference document for the working group which would accompany the work plan. An action item was noted to amend the work plan to note that the Chair will maintain a running record of our work. It was decided that leads would not be assigned at this point, but they may be allocated in future.

Workstream 1 – Algorithms

The group discussed algorithms work, including its scope. An early priority would be developing a shared understanding of our regulatory interest/s related to algorithms. The group agreed to amend the work plan to focus on algorithms in the first half of the year. The work plan will be amended with a workshop on algorithms taking place in October 2022, followed by the meeting on an algorithms literature review in November. The October workshop will consist of 15-minute presentations from each agency and some time will be scheduled to discuss the literature review. Each agency will then work on the literature review before the November meeting, with further work to aim to complete it by the end of the year.

The group discussed the importance of producing outputs from this work and it was agreed that a record of the workshop would be kept (e.g., a summary minute and associated powerpoint presentations) and a written record of the literature review.

With regard to monitoring news and developments in algorithms, eSafety and ACCC both noted they could share existing spreadsheets they have developed internally. ACMA agreed to check with the Data Working Group what their research hub tool is, with a view to potentially using it, though the group agreed to use existing spreadsheets for now.

Workstream 2 – Horizon scanning

There were no substantive comments on this proposed workstream in the work plan. Given the agreed changes to the timings of workstreams, the work plan will reflect that scoping for horizon scanning will take place in January followed by the horizon scanning workshop at the February meeting.

Workstream 3 – Analysis of technologies

The group discussed the pilot template and how it may evolve over time, the terminology describing the workstream, possible topics for analysis and the number of topics that may be considered during the year, though a decision was not made.

Workstream 4 - External engagement

The group provided feedback on the proposal in the work plan, discussing the appropriate level of engagement with external stakeholders between working groups and the steering committee, the purpose of engagement and the focus on engagement relevant to digital technologies for this group, as well as noting the need for a distinction in the work plan between proactive and reactive engagement. The Chair agreed to revise Workstream 4 to reflect the discussion before re-circulating the draft work plan.

Next steps and next meeting

The Chair outlined the next steps to complete the draft work plan ahead of Steering Committee. This included the ACCC updating and re-circulating the draft work plan by 7 September, with comments due on 8 September and submission taking place on 9 September.

Given the meeting ran over time, the Chair requested that members email with their ideas on engagement with the CSIRO and noted that a specific meeting at a later date could be arranged to discuss this if necessary.

It was agreed that the Algorithms Workshop should take place on a Wednesday morning in mid-October (and similar for the November meeting), the Chair will follow up with proposed dates.