

MEDIA RELEASE

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Internship at ABC unlocks insights into news distribution on YouTube

Arjun Srinivas, a PhD student at the QUT node of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S), has successfully completed a three-month internship with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), marking the first PhD internship of its kind for both ABC and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

Working closely with ABC's YouTube news desk in Brisbane, led by Gary Kemble, Social Media Lead at ABC news, Arjun investigated how a public service media organisation navigates the recommender systems of large commercial platforms, such as YouTube.

Gary said hosting Arjun was a great experience for the ABC YouTube team.

"We have always had theories about how YouTube and Google algorithms prioritise news content, but Arjun was able to apply his data-crunching experience and previous research to a live news environment, providing us with invaluable insights to do a better job of getting our content to new audiences," said Gary.

During the internship Arjun was given access to a host of analytics and data assets, including ABC's YouTube analytics suite, as well as other Third party databases such as Chartbeat and Trisolute. Arjun's objective during the placement was to triangulate data from multiple sources and derive insights backed by his own analysis to optimise ABC's news distribution strategy.

Arjun said "considering the placement coincided with two significant events in the news cycle, the Voice referendum, and the Israel-Hamas conflict, I was able to get valuable insights into how a Public Service Broadcaster such as the ABC reports on and strategises its news distribution on themes that can be sensitive and polarizing."

"The experience provided a unique institutional perspective on how ABC uses a platform such as Youtube to disseminate it's news,"

"It provided invaluable contextual information to have as I work toward the latter half of my PhD."

The internship built on Arjun's ongoing PhD thesis, titled YouTube's News Conundrum : An examination of 'authoritative sources' in YouTube's recommendations. The thesis explores how news consumption in Australia is mediated by the recommender systems of major digital platforms. The research also investigates how YouTube defines and promotes 'authoritative' publishers on the platform and the ensuing impact on the news and information environment.

Arjun's research is based on crowd-sourced search and recommendation data from YouTube obtained through the Australian Search Experience project at the ADM+S.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**The ADM+S Centre**

The ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S) is a cross-disciplinary, national research centre, which aims to create the knowledge and strategies necessary for responsible, ethical, and inclusive automated decision-making (ADM). Funded by the Australian Research Council from 2020 to 2027, ADM+S is hosted at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia, with nodes located at eight other Australian universities, and partners around the world. The Centre brings together leading researchers in the humanities, social and technological sciences in an international industry, research and civil society network. The Centre aims to contribute to the mitigation of the social and economic risks in the development and implementation of ADM, and to improve outcomes and efficiencies in four key focus areas where automation is already well advanced: news and media, transport and mobility, health care, and social services.