

THE CONVERSATION

Expert insights – Direct to the public

CONFIDENTIAL

US Prospectus


THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigor. Journalistic flair.

Strictly limited distribution

September 2012





The Conversation offers universities in the United States a mechanism to enrich real public discussion.

The Conversation can thereby expand a key component of the mission of universities and document the resulting engagement of the public.

Hunter R Rawlings III

President, Association of American Universities

TOWARDS A US CONVERSATION

The Conversation is inspired by a radical thought: what if we turn the university and research sector, with its vast expertise across every discipline, into a giant editorial resource to drive a new, direct channel of information? Our job would be to mine this intellectual gold, give it a polish and then share it with the public.

A year and a half on from our launch in Melbourne, we're proud of what The Conversation has achieved. Readers in Australia and beyond are informed and inspired by the contribution academics have made to the national debate, and Australian Universities have a global platform to showcase their expertise.

But we don't want to stop there. We have a successful model that can be applied elsewhere.

We want to launch Conversations in the UK, US and India, forming a global network of academic knowledge and journalistic excellence – but each one independent and appropriate to its territory. The US editorial team will engage in the local news cycle to ensure content is relevant and timely.

With globally renowned universities producing world class research, and a public thirsty for informed comment and reliable journalism, the US is ideally placed to benefit from The Conversation.

So late last year, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation awarded a grant to fund the pre-launch stage of a US version of The Conversation. The Association of American Universities offered to serve as a logistical partner and help introduce The Conversation-US, or TC-US, concept to its

members and higher-education affiliates. During the first half of 2012 we have been meeting with universities, foundations, journalists and private individuals and are pleased to report that an enormous amount of interest has been shown. The many messages of support and endorsement throughout this document are testament to that.

The Conversation-US is becoming a reality and we look forward to continuing and extending these conversations over the coming months.

This US Prospectus has been made possible by the generous support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Association of American Universities and the help of the members of the US Advisory Board.



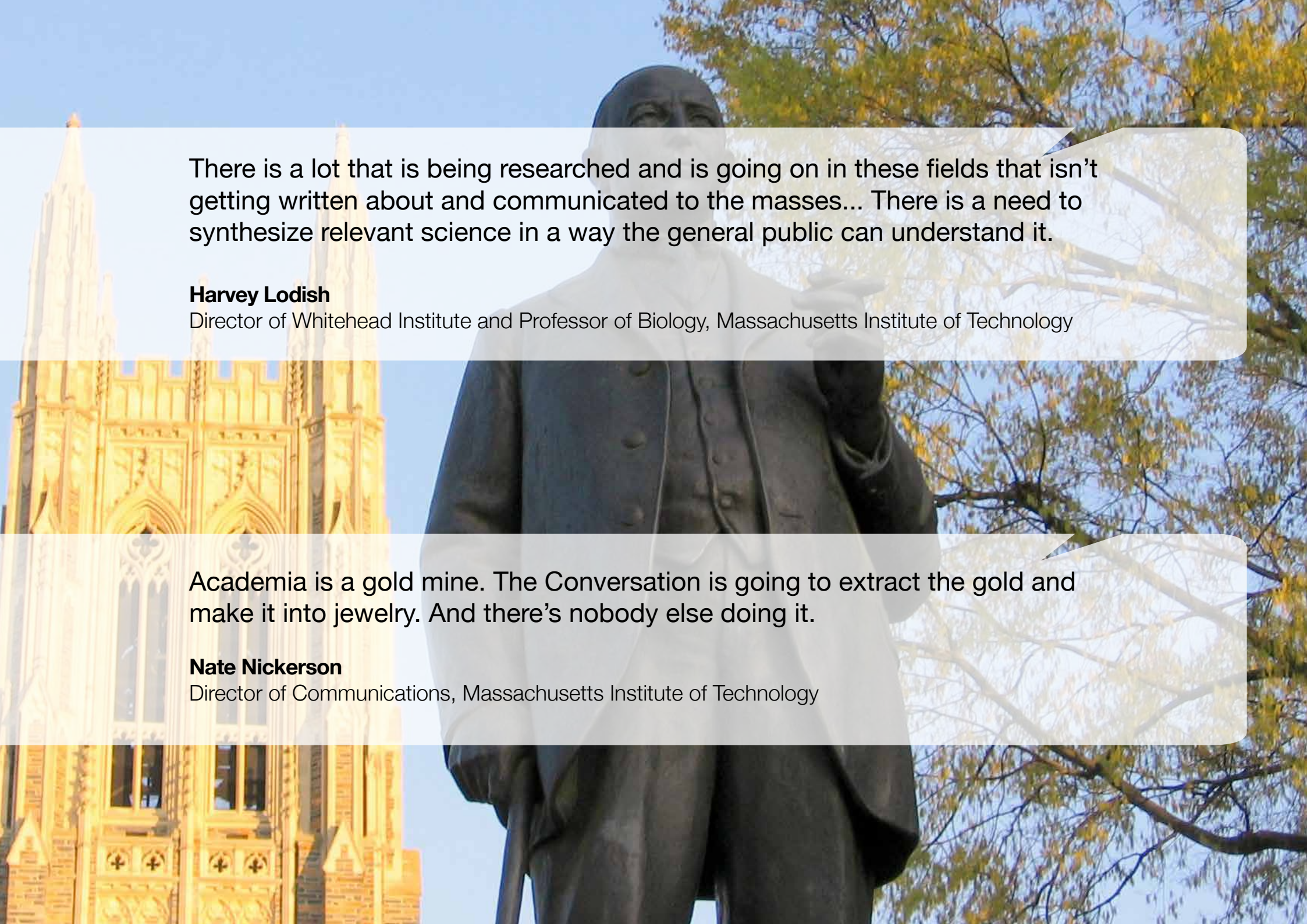
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Jaspán".

Andrew Jaspán
Editor-in-Chief



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Rosenbloom".

Joseph Rosenbloom
Chair of the TC-US Advisory Board



There is a lot that is being researched and is going on in these fields that isn't getting written about and communicated to the masses... There is a need to synthesize relevant science in a way the general public can understand it.

Harvey Lodish

Director of Whitehead Institute and Professor of Biology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Academia is a gold mine. The Conversation is going to extract the gold and make it into jewelry. And there's nobody else doing it.

Nate Nickerson

Director of Communications, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

PURPOSE OF THIS PROSPECTUS

The Prospectus aims to secure funding for the start-up and initial three-year operating costs of The Conversation US (TC-US). The funding required is \$8.3m over the first three years from launch.

TC-US will be owned and run independently of Australia but under license. That license provides IP, operating model, technology platform, technical infrastructure and support. TC-US is a not-for-profit charity, applying for 501(c) (3) status under the Internal Revenue Code.

TC-US will raise funding through:

- US universities becoming subscribers
- Foundation and other grant support

TC-US also seeks to:

- Secure the interest of academics and the wider community
- Secure universities and research institutes as content providers
- Interest talented journalists to join TC-US

Financial and funding objectives

1. Raise \$8.3m to cover launch and operating costs for the first 3 years
 - \$2.7m during the launch year
 - \$2.7m in year 2
 - \$2.9m in year 3
2. Sign up an initial base of university subscribing members
 - Secure support from as many of the 59 US members of AAU as possible in year 1 with a goal of further selected universities and research institutions within 3 years of launch
 - Subscription is tiered:
 - Partners** contribute \$100k pa
 - Members** contribute \$50k pa
 - Content Providers** \$4k pa(See tiered subscription details on page 22)
 - Those universities that join as Partners or Members prior to launch or within 3 months will be deemed Founding Partners or Members
3. Secure Foundation and Corporate grant support.
4. Obtain rent-free office accommodations for 3 years
 - Sufficient for up to 20 people
 - The donation will qualify for Partner status



THE CONVERSATION CONCEPT

The Problem

The public has greater and easier access to more information than ever before but what is available is increasingly less helpful in explaining what is happening in the world. The decline of mainstream media is partly to blame and no sustainable online business model has yet emerged.

About 20,000 reporters have recently lost their jobs in the US. In 1992, according to the Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University, there were 60,000 journalists. By 2009, that number had dropped to 40,000. The erosion has continued. Some major newspapers have cut back publication of their paper editions to three days a week – or not at all – and laid off staff accordingly.

The reporters who remain are overwhelmed by a 24-hour news cycle, and must cover a greater range of subjects. That has contributed to a lack of quality and accurate writing about the issues of the day, from science to politics.

Meanwhile, a rising PR army vigorously promotes its clients into that opportunity, while online media aggregators perpetuate poorly understood reports from unexamined sources. Aggregation

has increased the number of stories readers encounter but has done nothing for the quality of reporting or accuracy of the knowledge imparted.

Faster access to shallower content has led to information overload, what the Associated Press' July 2008 report *A New Model for News* called "news fatigue": "Participants in this study ... appeared debilitated by information overload and unsatisfying news experiences. Many consumers in the study were so overwhelmed and inundated by news that they just did not know what to do."

The study concluded that what news readers needed was not stories that arrived faster but stories that reached greater depth — what it called "below the fold" reporting that analyzes the backstory and explores its potential significance to the future. These stories are precisely the ones that are becoming more rare.

As mainstream journalism struggles, that leaves a key source of credible information and trusted analysis untapped: academics and researchers. Their work has been made possible by a huge investment by public and private US sources. Unfortunately, much of that

knowledge remains trapped within the Academy lacking a mechanism to share a wealth of findings, analysis and expertise with the public.

There has traditionally been an inefficient knowledge flow from universities to other parties, caused in part by technical writing and lengthy publishing deadlines.

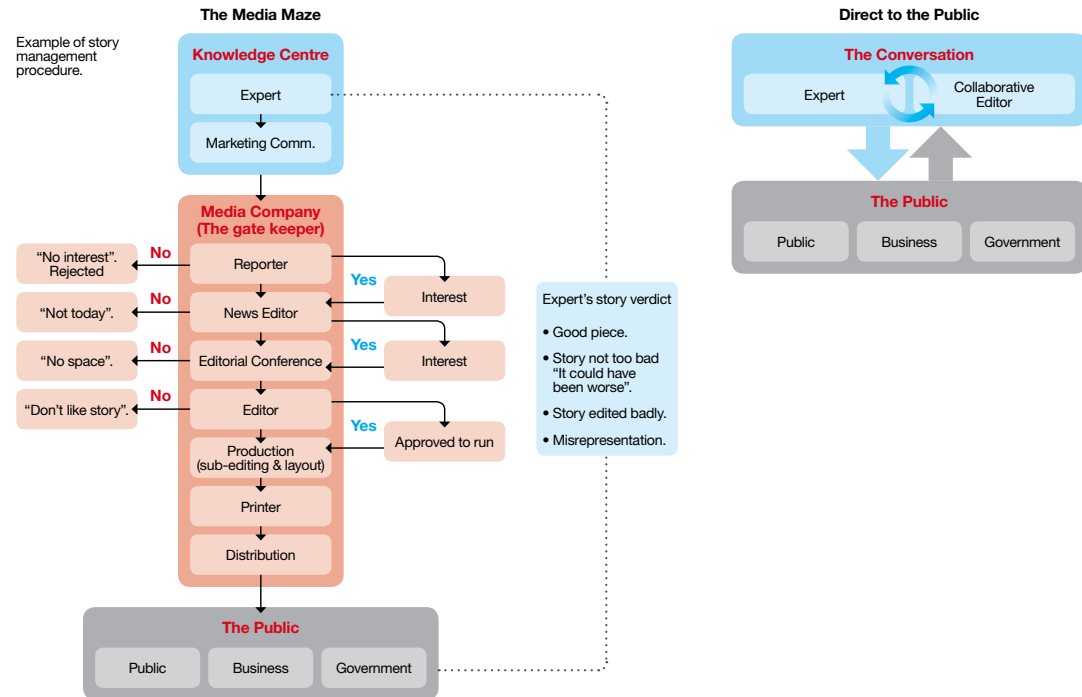
The Solution

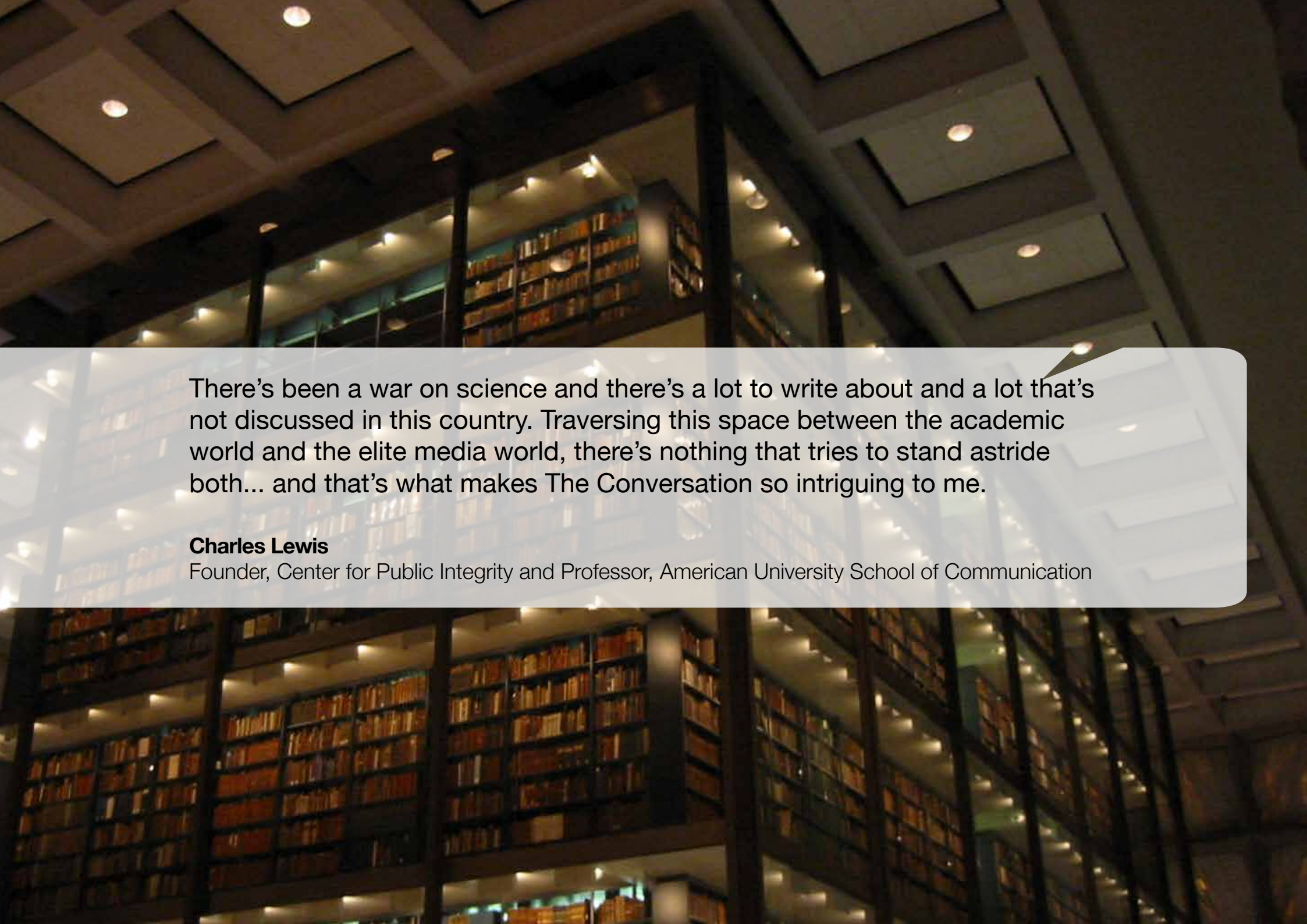
The Conversation helps to bridge the knowledge gap by providing a new, independent channel of premium information, analysis and opinion – direct from the experts and free to the public.

The Conversation is an interactive, online platform that serves as both an idea exchange and a knowledge network. Curated by professional editors who share a passion for informed debate and written by academics, whose expertise is second to none, it offers timely, expert commentary on the big issues of the day, as well as the latest research news and breakthroughs.

The Conversation is transparent and trusted – open to all but not aligned with any one institution. Committed to academic freedom, intellectual honesty and evidence-based research, The Conversation seeks to rebuild the foundation of informed debate that underpins our knowledge society and our democracy.

The Conversation is an indispensable tool for the media, providing the latest ideas, research and talent from the university sector. Over 40% of authors published on the Australian site have been followed up by other media.





There's been a war on science and there's a lot to write about and a lot that's not discussed in this country. Traversing this space between the academic world and the elite media world, there's nothing that tries to stand astride both... and that's what makes *The Conversation* so intriguing to me.

Charles Lewis

Founder, Center for Public Integrity and Professor, American University School of Communication

FROM CONCEPT TO PROVEN SUCCESS

The Australian site already attracts 350,000 readers per month with a nil spend on advertizing. Traffic to the site is driven by strong search engine optimization, Google News accreditation, extensive use of social media for marketing, and, most importantly, the strength of the content. We expect the US site to generate more than one million unique readers a month.

The 2,000 respondents to the March 2012 readership survey included consultants, lecturers, business owners, engineers, policy advisors, project managers, researchers, scientists and teachers.

- Non-academics represent 70% of readers
- The largest demographic is aged between 36 and 49, closely followed by 50-64
- There's an even 50/50 split between men and women across all ages
- 80% live in the inner city or suburbs
- 80% are working, 11% are retired,
- Almost 30% have someone in their household who owns a business
- 90% have a degree or higher and 47% hold a postgraduate degree
- The most highly valued aspects of the service are the lack of commercial bias (69%) and the editorial independence (63%)
- 40% of The Conversation Australia's readers are international, including 20% from the US

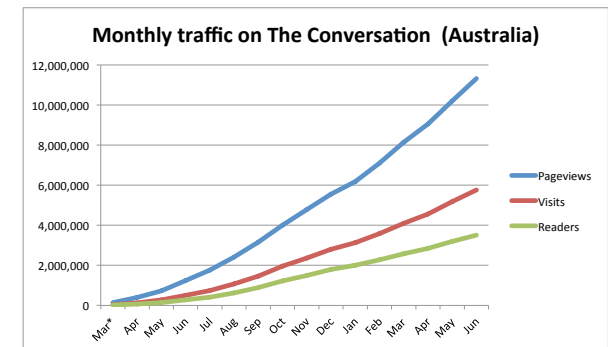
Promotion

The Conversation promotes each article via:

- Associated Press and/or Australian Associated Press release
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Distribution to more than 4,300 authors and subscribers (e.g., through newsletter, RSS feeds, email)
- 200+ sites republish The Conversation's articles, including Google News and Alltop.com
- More than 4,600 referring sites, with regular spikes from StumbleUpon, Reddit and Slashdot
- Futurity, the US-based online research news organization covering the latest discoveries by scientists at top universities in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia
- Inhouse university and research sector publications
- A growing body of media organizations that republish The Conversation's content. Our articles are licensed under Creative Commons and unless otherwise noted, are available for use for free. TC Australia has recently secured an agreement with Rural Press (under the Fairfax banner), which is an umbrella group of print media, for them to republish our content widely. This practice distributes our content broadly and supports under-staffed media organizations with quality content.

The Conversation has been mentioned in numerous publications, including:

- The New York Times
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Harvard University's Neiman Journalism Lab
- The Guardian
- 40+ media outlets in Australia, all of the majors (Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Australian)



GAP IN THE US MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The Conversation's high quality content and its cutting edge global platform can help address the gaps in the media landscape.

The Conversation is a not-for-profit, news and information service for the knowledge industries: research, higher education, and all other institutions committed to enriching society's foundation of learning, expertise and solutions. The Conversation is a primary platform for creating, aggregating and sharing knowledge both within the US and also internationally.

The changing flow of knowledge

Communicating new ideas and discoveries involves many participants, and steps. Knowledge has flowed sluggishly or crudely and, until the advent of the Internet, overwhelmingly in one direction, from author to reader. Researchers for years have published their findings in scientific magazines or trade journals (New Scientist, Science, What Matters, Allianz Knowledge). But the writing often is so technical and the review process so lengthy, that several months or years may pass before relevant and actionable insights trickle down to the public, policy makers or mass media. Knowledge flowing through the mass media can lack credibility among experts, who often worry that their insights will be misrepresented, insufficiently explained or omitted. Typically the focus is on controversial issues (climate change, cloning, genetically modified food), major discoveries (new vaccines or cancer cures) and odd or bizarre news (growing breasts) that will generate the most interest and therefore revenue. The less sensational stories about new thinking, knowledge advances and best practices

often are given cursory coverage or ignored entirely.

But the exponential growth of blogging, social media and other online communication is transforming how society creates, consumes, finds and shares knowledge. The public no longer is content to receive information passively. People increasingly want to inform, connect and engage with each other online. The search for knowledge often starts with Google and then quickly leads to Wikipedia. Although both are great resources, the credibility and relevance of the content they deliver are uncertain.

A complex and sophisticated media landscape

The US has a crowded, complex and sophisticated media marketplace, yet no resource is offering the same reader experience as The Conversation. A few media outlets, such as the Atlantic and ProPublica, provide intelligent commentary on topical issues. But content is generally written by journalists, who lack the expertise of academics. The Conversation is free from an 'editorial line', enabling it to be a trusted source for readers across the political spectrum.

The education sector itself also tries to present newsworthy information and expertise direct to the public. However, the communications offices at universities can be seen as mouthpieces for their institutions, with content driven by new research

outcomes rather than real-world events. With the full power of a newsroom, The Conversation looks first to what is going on in the world, and then to what expertise it can use to shed new light on the story.

On blogs like Monkey Cage, academics gather and post their own material. But such blogs, while eliminating the middleman, don't reach beyond their niche audience.

There are sites, like EurekAlert, which aim to bring new research stories to public attention, often very successfully, using existing media channels. But unlike The Conversation, they are an outlet not for information, analysis and commentary oriented toward a wide readership, but a vehicle to disseminate press releases.

Multimedia content will become increasingly prevalent in The Conversation. Some organizations already provide factual multimedia commentary. TED is well-known for its videos showcasing interesting ideas. However, TED does not have The Conversation's academic focus or topicality. The combination of academic focus with newsroom-mentality guarantees the uniqueness of future content on The Conversation.

A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE - A GLOBAL CONVERSATION

Universities and academics are global and local actors. Embedded in national communities, they have long worked at advancing the frontiers of universal knowledge. But the rise of the knowledge economy means universities have to operate in a new global marketplace.

There are many emerging challenges and opportunities facing the university sector - from demonstrating the impact of research to funders to the advent of online learning.

Competing to attract an international cadre of students who are keen to acquire degrees that will make them competitive at home and abroad, universities vie with each other to acquire international prestige in research and in teaching. With sites launching in the US, UK, India as well as Australia, The Conversation presents academics and their institutions a global knowledge network.

Amid increasing global competition for funding, staff and students, universities are under growing pressure to demonstrate a return on their research and teaching investment. Universities are being asked to go beyond traditional measures, such as patents and citations, and demonstrate broader economic, environmental and social

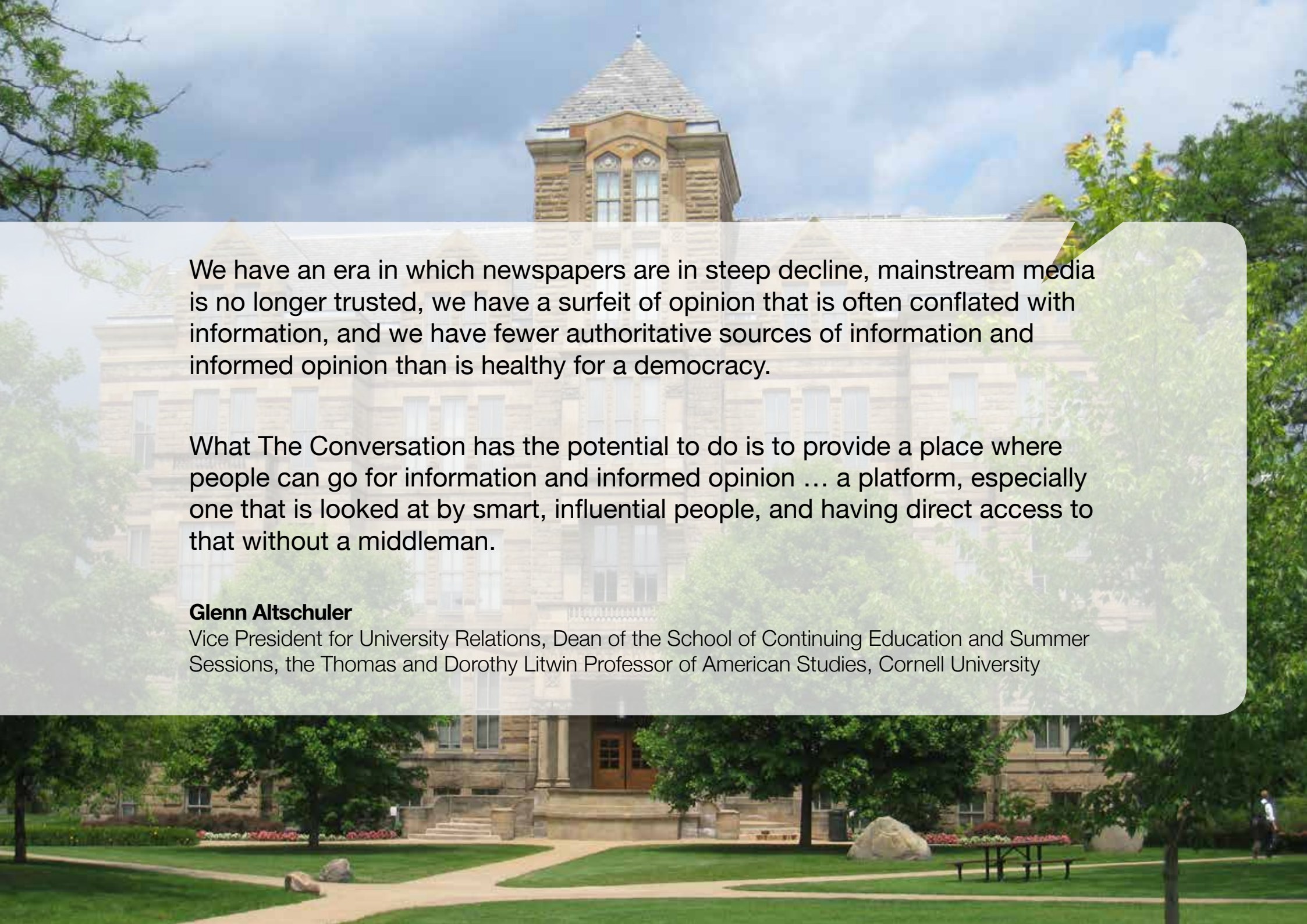
impacts, such as research changing industry practice, boosting innovation, generating revenue, entering social discourse and influencing government policy. Momentum is building worldwide and The Conversation keeps abreast of the changing landscape, including:

- Development of the Science and Technology for America's Reinvestment (STAR) Metrics in the US
- The UK's Research Excellence Framework
- Research impact measurement trials in Australia

Everyone is grappling with how to assess and track impact globally. Through The Conversation, more than 3,000 academics and researchers from 220 organizations can utilize our author and institutional dashboards to track and demonstrate social impact and public engagement. A recent survey demonstrates that our metrics are being used to support funding applications, demonstrate outreach and justify promotion. The Conversation offers prospective partner institutions in the US the same opportunities.

Universities in the US lead the world in the development and application of online learning technologies. The emergence of Massive Open Online Courses such as edX and Coursera present opportunities for universities, with the potential for benefits to flow to existing students, peer institutions and the broader community. The Conversation can facilitate a global discourse about the use and effectiveness of online learning.





We have an era in which newspapers are in steep decline, mainstream media is no longer trusted, we have a surfeit of opinion that is often conflated with information, and we have fewer authoritative sources of information and informed opinion than is healthy for a democracy.

What The Conversation has the potential to do is to provide a place where people can go for information and informed opinion ... a platform, especially one that is looked at by smart, influential people, and having direct access to that without a middleman.

Glenn Altschuler

Vice President for University Relations, Dean of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions, the Thomas and Dorothy Litwin Professor of American Studies, Cornell University

VALUE TO SOCIETY

We aim to bring down the walled garden that stands between the public and the academy to allow for better public conversations and more informed public policy outcomes.

The Conversation's Mission commits it to unlock the knowledge and deep expertise of researchers and academics to create an open, global knowledge repository.

Informed public debate

- Allows the public to engage in direct dialogue with knowledge leaders.
- Shows how research money is spent and what researchers are producing.
- Gives experts greater voice in public discussion and policy.

- Provides relevant and actionable solutions to enable an active, engaged citizenry to improve their lives and the world.

Respected and engaged universities

- Showcases cutting-edge research and how it can be applied.
- Creates additional funding, contract research and commercialization opportunities for research.
- Provides new metrics for citing and evaluating research.

Trusted, expert media

- Delivers the power to educate and inform with the best ideas.
- Brings intelligent people to the fore through a trusted new channel.
- Raises the quality of debate and informs other media, which can tap into this new resource.
- Taps our best minds to help people navigate difficulties and problems.

See [The Conversation's Charter](http://theconversation.edu.au/our_charter), available at theconversation.edu.au/our_charter.



TOPICAL, INFORMED, INTERESTING & IMPARTIAL CONTENT

Built with readability and easy navigation in mind, The Conversation's site is aimed at simplifying the reader experience.

Sections Go straight to the topics that most interest you. Each section is run by two dedicated Editors.

Hot Topics Each article on the site is tagged according to the topics it covers. The topics are an automatically-updated list of what people are reading about on the site right now.

Analysis and Comment Articles are written in response to topical news events. Everything in this section is commissioned by one of our editors and authored by an academic with relevant expertise.

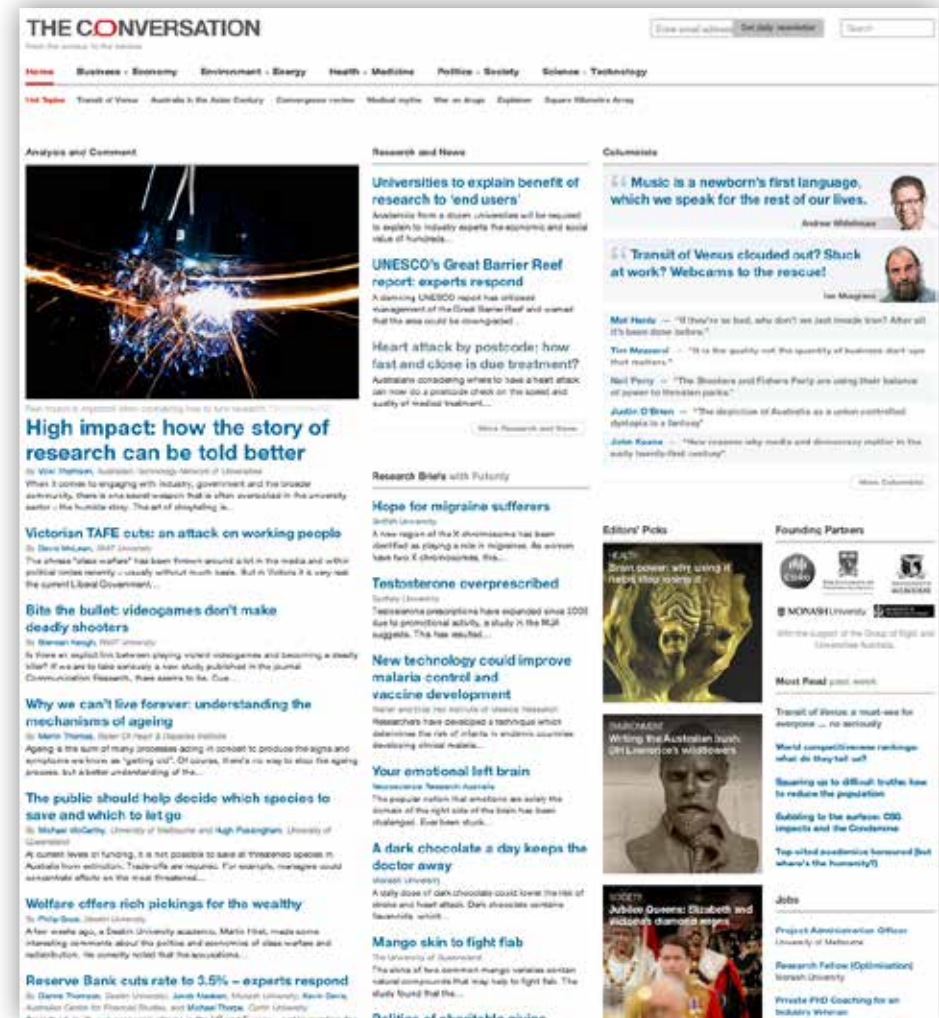
Research News The latest news from the world of research, written by our news editor. The Conversation partners with the US-based **Futurity** to deliver research findings from US, UK and Australian universities.

Special Features In depth coverage of a particular event or issue. Recent examples include medical myths, fracking, and gay marriage.

Columnists Highlighting some of our best regular contributors. The search for new public intellectuals begins here.

Author Credentials Each article links to an author page, with details of their institution and expertise. Who authors are and their area of expertise are as relevant as what they say.

Disclosure statement We demand full transparency of funding and any affiliations. Failure to disclose may lead to disbarment from the site.



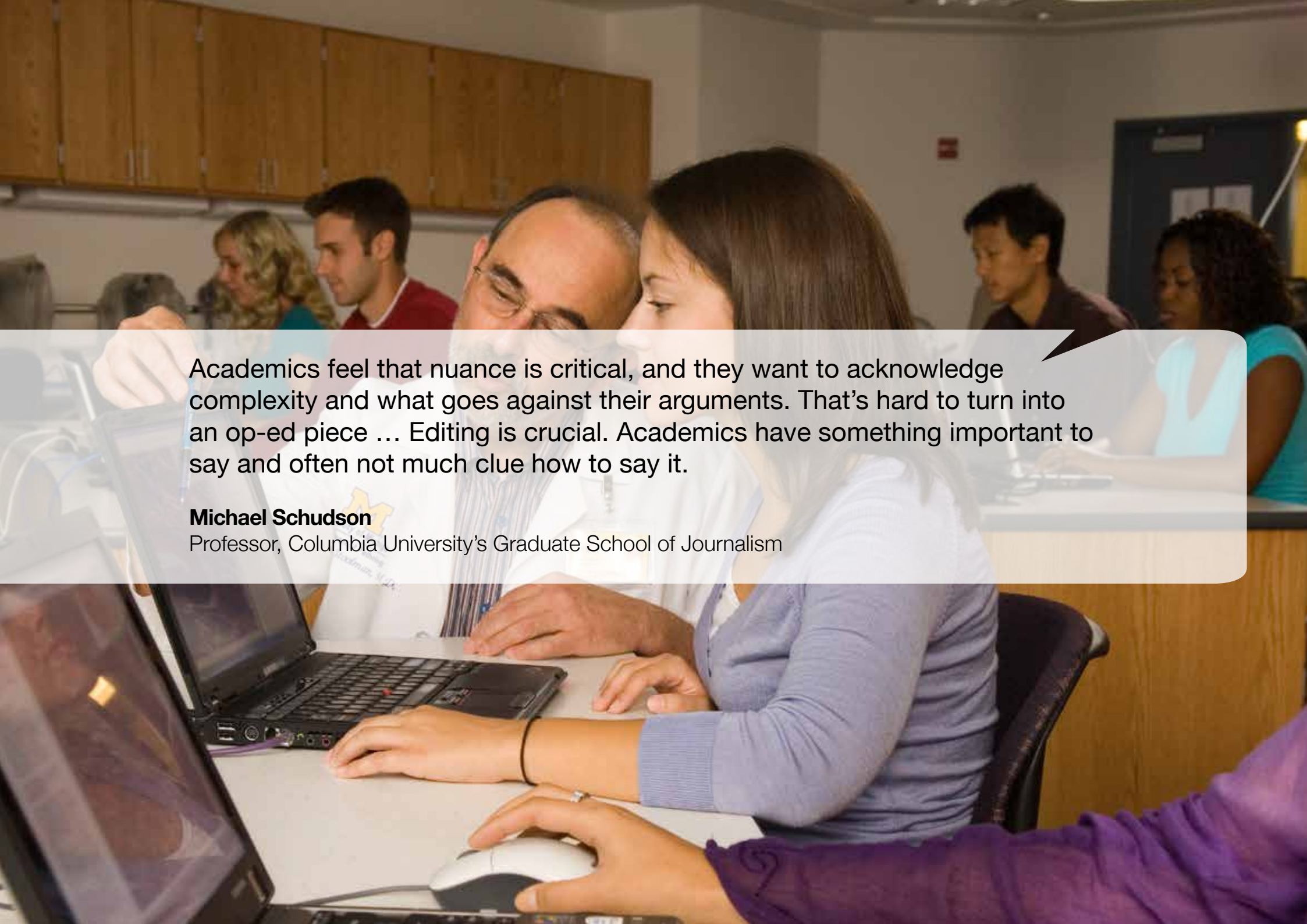
EVERY AUTHOR GETS A DASHBOARD

Every contributing academic and researcher gets access to their own individual dashboard showing articles in progress, readers per article, tweets, republications and comments.

The Conversation's metrics dashboard system tracks and demonstrates social impact and public engagement for both individual academics and specific institutions. According to a recent author survey, these metrics are being used by academics to support funding applications, demonstrate outreach and justify promotion.

The Conversation has begun working with leading universities, funding bodies and multinational companies within Australia, India, the US and UK to enhance and extend our publishing and metrics technology. As a not-for-profit educational trust, we are committed to working with the sector to adopt best practices and global standards that support domestic initiatives.





Academics feel that nuance is critical, and they want to acknowledge complexity and what goes against their arguments. That's hard to turn into an op-ed piece ... Editing is crucial. Academics have something important to say and often not much clue how to say it.

Michael Schudson

Professor, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism

EVEN TECHNOLOGY IS PART OF THE STORY

The Conversation has developed its own technology platform for the co-authoring of articles and the measurement of readership. This platform enables:

1. Co-authoring and real-time publishing of academically rigorous content.

The authoring platform enables the professional editors to collaborate with academic authors in real-time to produce engaging, academically rigorous content and distribute it across multiple channels within the news cycle.

2. Pitching article complexity at the right level - the Readability Index.

Most academics comfortably communicate at a university level but need help translating their insights for the general public. To reach a wider audience, The Conversation assumes readers have a reading ability of an educated 16-year-old. The readability index is built into the technology platform and analyzes article complexity, offering authors writing tips to pitch their article at a level that appeals to a general but well-informed audience. The writing interface also includes a “How To” section with tips on writing good articles, crafting good headlines and formatting. Authors can also embed links to other research, images and videos. The Conversation has adopted The Economist’s style-guide.


3. Re-establishing trust between academics, journalists and the public - joint sign off

Authors have final signoff on all content including their article, headline and accompanying images – and this process is built into the platform.

4. Extending and measuring the reach of academics - metrics on a dashboard.

Our dashboard and metrics enable every author to track their public engagement and social impact. Individual metrics are then aggregated into institutional dashboards to create awareness of leading authors and facilitate benchmarking against peer institutions.



An overhead photograph of four business professionals sitting around a light-colored conference table. The participants include two men and two women, all dressed in professional attire. They are engaged in a meeting, with one man using a calculator and another man looking at a laptop. The room has a blue carpet. A semi-transparent white box with rounded corners is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

There's all this expertise here that we're just not tapping into. There are smart people who write fascinating essays for one another's consumption, but nonetheless could speak to a larger audience hungry for it.

David Folkenflik

Media Correspondent, National Public Radio

THE CONVERSATION WITH ACADEMICS & JOURNALISTS

The content of The Conversation is the result of close collaboration between academics and journalists. The Conversation provides academics with a safe way to engage in public debate and gives the public access to premium information, analysis and opinion. Journalists work with academics to structure ideas, polish prose and express their ideas clearly for a wide audience. Authors have the confidence of ultimate control of the process: nothing is published without their sign-off and articles are produced using co-authoring software specially designed by The Conversation's own developers.

In this way academics can introduce a new form of quality content into the public arena, freely available to all through Creative Commons licensing. Articles

are frequently reproduced in other publications requiring only an acknowledgement of the original source and writer. Indeed, The Conversation actively seeks to have its articles republished, thereby promoting the subject matter, the academics, and the institutions involved to an even wider audience.

Encouraging talent

A significant aim of The Conversation is to encourage, draw out and nurture ability in all areas of the Academy. This includes giving younger or newer academics and researchers the confidence to engage with the public in a less intimidating way than offered by the more traditional research journals.

An academic's experience

The Conversation's engagement should not be underestimated, especially for Early Career Researchers like me. It provides a forum for developing personal branding experience and media exposure in both academic and public forums. Its

short, easily readable pieces are also an excellent resource to send or to be found by current and future collaborators and students. I have published eight articles in The Conversation since the middle of last year. In total they have been read by almost 20,000 readers. About 41% have been from the US, 37% from Australia,

5% each from the UK and Canada and the remainder from other countries. My two highest read articles have been read by 6,356 and 4,759 readers respectively. These numbers far outweigh anything that an academic publication could reach.

Dr. Sean Rintel
University of Queensland

HOW THE PUBLIC PERCEIVES MEDIA

80%

OF RESPONDENTS SEE NEWS MEDIA AS OFTEN INFLUENCED BY POWERFUL PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

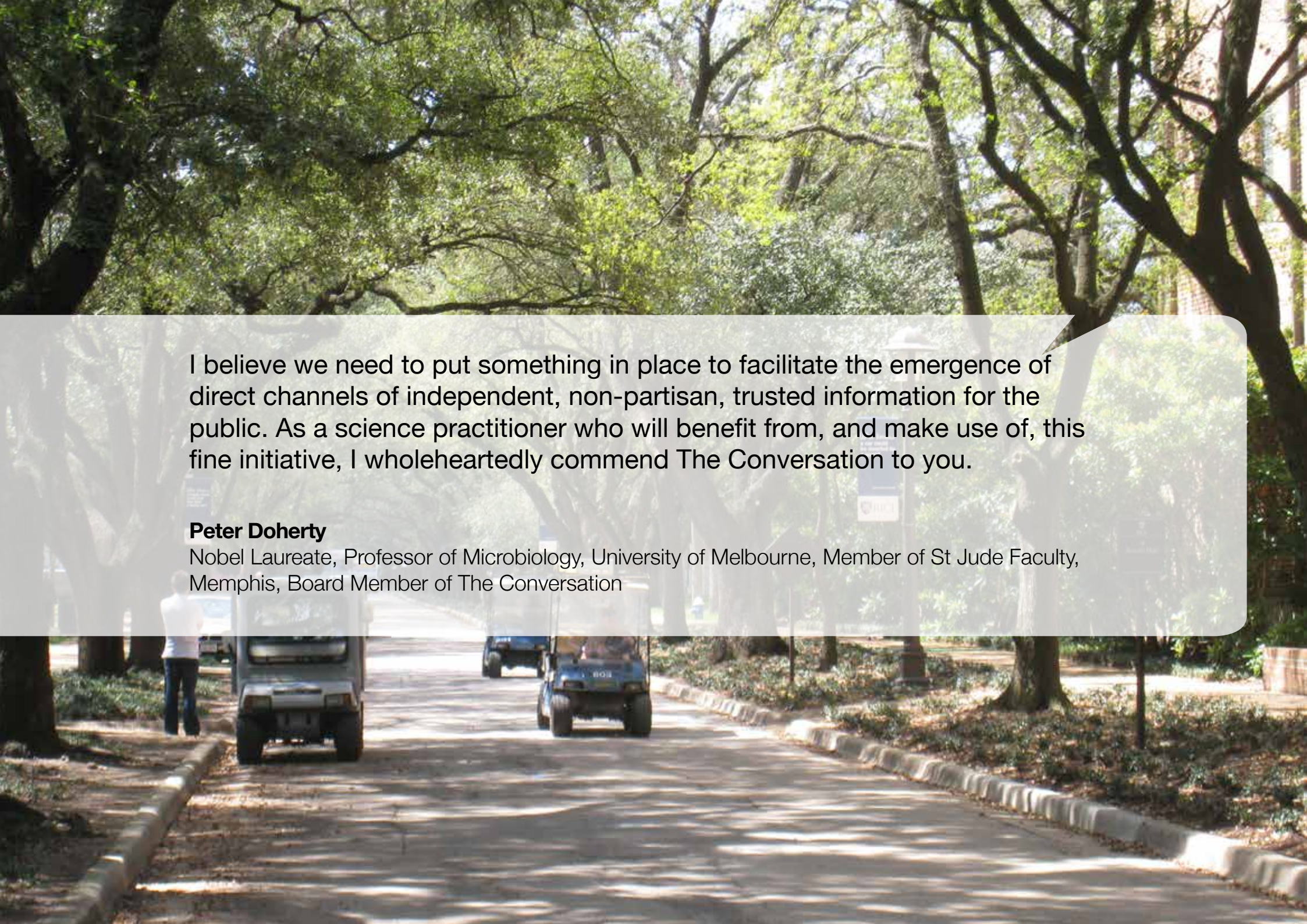
77%

OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE NEWS MEDIA TENDS TO FAVOR ONE SIDE OF AN ISSUE

72%

OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVE NEWS MEDIA TRY TO COVER UP THEIR MISTAKES

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTRE

A photograph of a tree-lined path on a university campus. The path is paved and runs through a dense canopy of green trees. Several golf carts are visible on the path, and a person is walking on the left side. The scene is bright and sunny, with dappled light on the ground.

I believe we need to put something in place to facilitate the emergence of direct channels of independent, non-partisan, trusted information for the public. As a science practitioner who will benefit from, and make use of, this fine initiative, I wholeheartedly commend The Conversation to you.

Peter Doherty

Nobel Laureate, Professor of Microbiology, University of Melbourne, Member of St Jude Faculty, Memphis, Board Member of The Conversation

THE CONVERSATION WITH UNIVERSITIES

The Conversation publishes the best analysis, commentary and research stories from across the Academy. But it places a special relationship with its subscribing universities, working in collaboration with them to uncover material and stories. There is a liaison between The Conversation and its subscribing members to ensure their relationship is utilized to its best mutual advantage.

Subscribing universities also receive specific benefits:

- Social impact reporting with geographic and benchmarking metrics
- Whole-of-institution dashboard with social impact and benchmarking metrics
- Article promotion and distribution on social networks
- Author dashboard with social impact metrics for each contributing academic
- Real-time co-authoring software with readability index
- Simultaneous publishing on institution website
- Institutional profile page showcasing analysis, comment, research, and authors
- Alerts that notify media teams when an academic publishes

There are additional benefits for Partners and Members (see page 22).

Universities subscribe to The Conversation because it...

...offers a way in which research can be safely disseminated in an intelligible way and to a wide audience

...is a unique and valuable tool enabling aspects of public engagement to be measured, and so could be useful in seeking funding from a variety of sources

...promotes the university more widely and on an independent platform

...stimulates wide media coverage about the university and generates significant additional press inquiries to the media/communications team

...enables their academics to enhance their public reputations and develop their careers

...encourages a conversation between the university and the wider world

...encourages talent, often giving an early opportunity for less experienced academics

...is an exciting and dynamic platform in which the university is publicly seen to be actively involved

The Conversation is a key tool in public engagement:

- Enriching the institution's research, teaching and learning
- Providing internships for budding journalists from journalism schools
- Strengthening the University's brand and identity
- Increasing public appreciation of and support for higher education and research
- Motivating and developing staff and students
- Maximizing the flow of knowledge between universities and society

US universities, particularly the many leading institutions that receive significant research grants from government or foundations, have a mission to translate their knowledge into the utmost benefit for the public, not only in the United States but worldwide.

That principle is enshrined in an outreach requirement of research grants to universities from the National Science Foundation. TC-US will offer an avenue that is suitable for satisfying the requirement and also generate metrics to measure readership of the articles published and other indices of impact.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP

University membership underpins The Conversation. Please join us.*

THE CONVERSATION Benefits

	Partner	Member	Content provider
	\$100K p.a.	\$50K p.a.	\$4K p.a.
Brand recognition on site	Y	Y	Y
Access to author dashboard	Y	Y	Y
Alerts to media teams when academics publish	Y	Y	
Simultaneous publishing on university website	Y	Y	
Institution dashboard with social impact and benchmarking	Y	Y	
Dedicated partner page, logos & links	Y	Y	
Seat on Media Advisory Board	Y	Y	
Seat on Editorial Board	Y		
Staff secondments	Y		
Rotating seat on Board of Directors	Y		



* Should we fail to raise the required funding, this project will not go ahead.

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Conversation US is being established as a not-for-profit corporation under the Internal Revenue Code with the purpose of advancing the wider understanding of all types of knowledge. An application has been lodged for incorporation and we are now applying for 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code.

TC-US' purposes are:

1. The advancement of education through the provision of a platform for the creation, aggregation and communication of news and information services relating to the knowledge industries (including research, higher education, consulting, etc).
2. The communication of all academic disciplines and their benefits as broadly as possible to enrich society's foundations of knowledge, expertise and solutions.
3. The engagement of participants from the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, engineering and health sciences as well as the humanities, arts and social sciences.

A Board of Directors (Trustees) will oversee all TC-US' activities.



FINANCING THE CONVERSATION

The Conversation US will build over a period of 3 years.

Once established, The Conversation's income model will be principally university subscriptions and grant funding.

More detailed financial projections are available on request from potential funders, sponsors or subscribers. Summary figures are presented here.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
INCOME			
Partner	\$300,000	\$600,000	\$800,000
Member	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Content Provider	\$88,000	\$136,000	\$200,000
Grants	\$2,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$2,638,000	\$2,736,000	\$3,000,000
OPERATING COSTS			
Staffing	\$1,964,904	\$2,092,188	\$2,261,043
Technology Platform	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Other costs and overheads	\$421,769	\$434,422	\$447,454
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	\$2,586,673	\$2,726,609	\$2,908,498
CAPITAL OR NON-RECURRING COSTS			
Build Technology platform	\$68,000	\$0	\$0
Computers, IT, equipment	\$57,000	\$6,000	\$0
Furniture, fitting out, etc	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	\$135,000	\$6,000	\$0
TOTAL COSTS	\$2,721,673	\$2,732,609	\$2,908,498
CONTINGENCY (Income - Costs)	-\$83,673	\$3,391	\$91,502
Year End Cash Balance	-\$83,673	-\$80,282	\$11,220

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

- 1. Staffing.** The team will comprise: Editor; General Manager; Business Development Manager; Managing Editor; News Editor; 6 Section Editors; 6 Deputy Editors; 1 Developer; 1 Finance Manager; 1 Administrative Assistant. The Business Development Manager will not be appointed until Year 2.

contribute \$100k pa; Members contribute \$50k pa and Content Providers contribute \$4,000 pa.
- 2. Rent.** Rent has been estimated for Boston. In reality the base may be in a less costly area.
- 3. Technical Platform Costs.** A one-off fee for building the US website is included as part of capital costs. In addition, there is an annual license fee to TC Australia, principally for the technology platform and hosting. It also covers branding, trademarks, URLs, sales and marketing materials, editorial policies and know-how. It represents value for money, as Australia has successfully developed a world-first, safe publishing platform and metrics service, all of which is immediately available to the US operation, saving significant start-up and development costs. It will also help reduce US technical staffing costs.
- 4. Subscription model.** TC-US is based on a tiered university subscription model. Partners
- 5. Grants.** TC-US will require grant funding to establish the service over 5 years. But as university income builds, grants will diminish.

A VIEW FROM OUR AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS



Professor Glyn Davis

President, University of Melbourne, Chair of Universities Australia, and Chair of Universitas21

It has been a privilege and an education to see how a small team with great leadership can help shape the future of the media. Best wishes to everyone associated with a magnificent publication, The Conversation.



Professor Ed Byrne

President, Monash University

The Conversation is one of the most important developments in higher education in the last ten years. It allows universities to bring greater relevance of academic work to the community at large and shows the impact of the university sector.



Professor Paul Johnson

President, University of Western Australia

We strongly support The Conversation for the role it plays in socializing the research and new knowledge created by our researchers. The Conversation provides an ideal platform for researchers at all levels to develop a national and public profile as an expert in their area of expertise, and to inform the world about the value of universities.



Professor Ross Milbourne

President, University of Technology Sydney

The Conversation is a great addition to the traditional media. With digital technologies pushing the boundaries of communication, The Conversation provides opportunities for our academics to influence public debate as never before. UTS is most proud to be a Founding Partner.

OUR US SUPPORTERS

We are extremely grateful for the initial support we have received from the Sloan Foundation, as well as the assistance provided by the Association of American Universities, which has enabled us to study the US marketplace for The Conversation and to produce this Prospectus.



**ALFRED P. SLOAN
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American Universities**

www.aau.edu

This Prospectus has been developed with the assistance of an Advisory Board that includes:

- Charles Lewis, Professor, Founder, Center for Public Integrity
- Ethan Zuckerman, Director, Center for Civic Media, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Glenn Altschuler, Vice President University Relations, Cornell University
- Harvey Lodish, Director, Whitehead Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- James Paradis, Interim Director, Comparative Media Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
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- John Wihbey, Web Journalist, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University
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- Paul Steiger, Editor in Chief, CEO, President, ProPublica
- Charles "Robin" Hogen, Director of Strategic Communications, Yale University
- Roger Cohn, Editor Yale Environment 360, School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Yale University



OUR TEAM



Joseph Rosenbloom
Chair (US)

Joe is a journalist with 40 years of experience as an editor, reporter and writer. Trained as a lawyer, he is a former senior editor at Inc. magazine; investigative reporter for Frontline, the PBS documentary series; and a reporter and editorial writer for The Boston Globe. Now a contributing editor to The American Lawyer magazine, he has won numerous journalism awards, including a Peabody and an Emmy.



Andrew Jaskan
Editor-in-Chief

Andrew is a journalist who has worked at all levels of publishing in the UK, France and Australia for the last 30 years. He has been an Editor since 1990 and during that time has edited Scotland on Sunday, The Scotsman, The Observer, The Big Issue, The Sunday Herald, and most recently The Age (2004-2008) He co-founded The Conversation and is Editor-in-chief.



Emily Lodish
US Relationship
Manager (US)

Emily is currently Asia Editor with the GlobalPost in Boston, where she manages a team of correspondents. She assigns, edits and publishes work direct to the web. Previously she worked as Associate Editor/Reporter for the Cambodia Daily in Phnom Penh, covering everything from forced evictions to the opening of the first-ever Western fast-food restaurant. Educated at Yale University, (BA, English and Theater double major), she also won a scholarship, USAA Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America.



Laurel Savino
Coordinator (US)

Based in New Mexico, Laurel works in fundraising and communications for non-profits with an emphasis on conservation, education and science research organizations. Her work is characterized by a focus on long-term financial stability and organizational capacity especially for new or expanding efforts. Among her recent favorite projects are the development of a large urban park, the establishment of state offices for a national land conservation organization and the founding of an endowment for a public school district.



Jack Rejtman
General Manager

Jack has 18 years experience in media and technology. He has led global, strategic initiatives in the US, UK and Asia – most recently heading up digital strategy, planning and product development for the Yahoo News Election'08 website, which was ranked the #1 U.S. presidential election site globally by comScore Media Metrix. Previously, Jack worked as a digital strategy consultant. Jack co-founded The Conversation.

The Australian version of The Conversation can be seen at <http://www.theconversation.edu.au>

The website will live at <http://www.theconversation.com>

CONTACTS IN US

Emily Lodish
The Conversation US
C/o 412 Centre Street, Apt 1
Boston, MA 02130
USA

email: emily.lodish@theconversation.edu.au

(301) 943-0078

CONTACT IN AUSTRALIA

Damian Thompson
The Conversation
Level 3, 33 Lincoln Square South
Melbourne VIC 3010
Australia

email: damian.thompson@theconversation.edu.au