



INTS1302

Navigating Digital Worlds

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of International Studies

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

How do platforms, algorithms, and data systems shape how we live, work, and relate to one another? This unit explores the digital infrastructures embedded in everyday life, from social media feeds and predictive text to biometric scans and algorithmic recommendations. Rather than focusing on technical skills, students analyse these systems as cultural and political forces that influence identity, behaviour, and opportunity. Topics include platform design, data ethics, surveillance, digital labour, and bias in AI. Students will investigate how algorithmic decisions affect everything from job applications to dating, and how digital environments reinforce or challenge norms around gender, race, class, and power. A core feature of the unit is working with generative technologies through prompt development and reflection. Students will learn how prompts shape both ideas and outputs, and how interacting with AI involves a form of co-authorship between human intention and machine logic. Prompt-writing becomes a method for interrogating what these systems value, who they centre, and how they construct meaning. By the end of the unit, students will be equipped to critically map the digital systems shaping their world, and ask informed, ethical questions about their design, impact, and future.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Investigate how digital platforms and technologies mediate identity, community, and participation in contemporary societies.

ULO2: Assess the risks and opportunities of digital engagement for individuals and groups across cultural and social contexts.

ULO3: Demonstrate digital literacy by curating, navigating, and ethically participating in online environments.

ULO4: Produce multimodal content that communicates insights about digital life to varied audiences and professional settings.

General Assessment Information

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/appeals/grade-appeal>

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Platform Report	25%	No	04/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Online Community Presentation	35%	No	From Week 9 until week 13	Individual	No	Open
Policy Proposal	40%	No	06/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Platform Report

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **04/09/2026**

Weighting: **25%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Choose from selected digital platforms/online communities and report on how affordances, algorithms, moderation and community norms shape participation, identity and visibility.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Investigate how digital platforms and technologies mediate identity, community, and participation in contemporary societies.

- Assess the risks and opportunities of digital engagement for individuals and groups across cultural and social contexts.
- Produce multimodal content that communicates insights about digital life to varied audiences and professional settings.

Online Community Presentation

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **From Week 9 until week 13**

Weighting: **35%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

A presentation based on the case from Assessment 1. Explain key patterns, issues or developments in how communities utilize the platform, forecast future developments in the platform and its users and communicate your findings to a specific audience.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Investigate how digital platforms and technologies mediate identity, community, and participation in contemporary societies.
- Assess the risks and opportunities of digital engagement for individuals and groups across cultural and social contexts.
- Demonstrate digital literacy by curating, navigating, and ethically participating in online environments.

Policy Proposal

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **06/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Prepare a policy proposal addressing a platform moderation, participation, or algorithmic issue in the AI age. Identify concerns and opportunities and recommend courses of action for a relevant stakeholder.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Investigate how digital platforms and technologies mediate identity, community, and

participation in contemporary societies.

- Assess the risks and opportunities of digital engagement for individuals and groups across cultural and social contexts.
- Produce multimodal content that communicates insights about digital life to varied audiences and professional settings.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Delivery and Resources

CLASSES

- Lectures: Tuesday, 1pm–3pm (17WW G02 Lecture Theatre). Weekly lectures will be recorded and made available in Echo360 within 48 hours of the scheduled class time.
- Tutorials: Please refer to your timetable for tutorial allocations.

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes watching or attending lectures prior to seminars or tutorials, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn/Leganto, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all seminar or tutorial sessions, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to the on-line discussion forums/activities.
- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and the Leganto site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at http://students.mq.edu.au/it_services/

Unit Schedule

EKS	DATES	WEEKLY FOCUS	LECTURER
Week 1	27/07/26 - 02/08/26	History of Digital Worlds	Dr. Wes Robertson
Week 2	03/08/26 - 09/08/26	How and Why Do We Digital Worlds?	Dr. Thomas Baudinette
Week 3	10/08/26 - 16/08/26	The Ethics of Investigating Digital Worlds	Dr. Brian Ballsun - Stanton
Week 4	17/08/26 - 23/08/26	Are We Data? (Do We Matter?)	Dr. Brian Ballsun - Stanton
Week 5	24/08/26 - 30/08/26	You Are What You Click: Self Presentation, Platforms, and the Generation of Culture	Dr. Thomas Baudinette
Week 6	31/08/26 - 06/09/26	Extremist Cultures Online	Dr. Brian Ballsun - Stanton
Week 7	07/09/26 - 13/09/26	Exploring the Affective Politics of Algorithms	Dr. Thomas Baudinette
Week 8	14/09/26 - 20/09/26	Gaming Cultures	Dr. Wes Robertson
RECESS	21/09/26 - 04/09/26		
Week 9	05/10/26 - 11/10/26	Platform Governance (The Failed Dream of the Unregulated Internet)	Dr. Wes Robertson
Week 10	12/10/26 – 18/10/26	Data Ethics, Consent, & Privacy	Dr. Patricia Koromvokis
Week 11	19/10/26 – 25/10/26	Data Management: Who Owns Personal Data	Dr. Jasna Novak-Milic
Week 12	26/10/26 – 01/11/26	Digital Labor & Inequality: Who Owns A Digital World	Dr. Patricia Koromvokis - Dr. Jasna Novak-Milic

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)

- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)