

# VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE ON MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

In 2019, the Australian Government requested that major digital platforms develop a voluntary code of practice outlining their actions to address mis- and disinformation. Published in 2021 by the Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI), a non-profit industry association, the code of practice commits signatories to improving the online information space and decreasing the spread of mis- and disinformation on their platforms.

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- **Theme**  
Regulatory and policy responses
- **Keyword**  
Self-regulation | Code of practice | Transparency requirements | Co-operation with the private sector
- **Country**  
Australia

## Challenge

The code of practice was developed in response to the Australian government's policy set out in the 2019 [Regulating in the Digital Age: Government Response and Implementation Roadmap](#). The roadmap flagged the importance of ensuring that Australians have the confidence and tools to benefit from the opportunities provided by digital platforms. In turn, building confidence depends on strengthening the public's ability to determine the quality and source of information, as well as enabling access to clear and transparent processes for having their complaints about digital platforms heard.

## Government action

Based on the government's 2019 request and the European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation, the Digital Industry Group Inc (DIGI), a non-profit industry association, published

the [Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation](#) in 2021. The aim of the code is to help clarify what platforms are doing to tackle disinformation and support Australians' abilities to identify quality news and information.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) oversees the code of practice. ACMA reports on digital platforms' disinformation and news quality measures; engages with DIGI, signatories and other parties on the operation of, and potential improvements to, the code, and encourages more platforms to join. The voluntary code currently has eight signatories: Adobe, Apple, Google, Meta, Microsoft, Redbubble, TikTok and Twitter. In addition to submitting annual progress reports to the ACMA, signatories commit to:

- enacting safeguards against harm arising from the spread of mis- and disinformation on their platforms
- disrupting advertising and monetisation incentives for the spread of mis- and disinformation
- working to ensure the security and integrity of the platform's services and products
- empowering users to make better-informed choices of digital content and helping them identify false and misleading content
- increasing transparency around political advertising
- supporting research that improves public understanding of mis- and disinformation
- publicising the measures platforms are taking to combat mis- and disinformation.

In October 2021, DIGI strengthened the code by enabling the public to report breaches by signatories of their commitments. In December 2022, DIGI submitted a further updated version in response to stakeholder feedback. Updates focused on making it easier for smaller companies to adopt the code and clarifying the specific products and services covered.

## Relevance for policymakers

- The process of developing and overseeing the code of practice facilitates tangible and constructive dialogue between the government and the private sector.
- Oversight provided by the ACMA will help ensure the code is updated regularly and that lessons from the implementation of the code feed into other applicable policy and regulatory discussions.
- Consistent reporting by the signatories and the ACMA will facilitate analysis of the impact of the code of practice over time, helping improve understanding of the potential and effectiveness of self-regulatory approaches.
- By building on the European Union Code of Practice on Disinformation, the Australian code of practice provides an additional case from which other governments can learn and assess the relevance and success of the initiative.

## Further information

[Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation \(December 2022\)](#)

[Digital Industry Group Inc. overview of the code of practice](#)

[Australian Communications and Media Authority \(ACMA\) Online Misinformation](#)

[Regulating in the Digital Age: Government Response and Implementation Roadmap \(2019\)](#)

## OECD resources

OECD (2022), *Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy: Preparing the Ground for Government Action*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/76972a4a-en>