

## UQ 2019/2020 Summer Research School of Social Science

<b>Project title:</b>	<b>Understanding Australian government online – a state by state comparison</b>
<b>Project duration:</b>	6-10 weeks
<b>Description:</b>	<p><b>Background</b> The internet and social media are now central to the operation of government. While there has been a lot of research conducted about this, there has been little research using social science digital research methods to map the shape and use of such technologies.</p> <p><b>Aims</b> Located within a larger international study, this project will examine either the government webportals or social media usage of all Australian states to compare similarities and differences in their design and activity.</p> <p><b>Approach</b> The project will involve either:</p> <p>(a) webcrawling of each state government’s web portal to produce a hyperlink network of the portal and neighbours. These hyperlink networks will be analysed using social networks techniques and visualisations</p> <p>(b) identify of each state government’s social media presence and their activity, then undertake an analysis of key twitter accounts, their followers and followings, and their activity levels. (Where possible consideration of YouTube and Facebook would also be considered.)</p>
<b>Expected outcomes and deliverables:</b>	<p>Scholars will gain skills in digital social science research methods, particularly the use of R Studio to undertake web scraping, data analytics and visualisation. More broadly, the scholars will learn how cutting edge digital research methods can be used to answer social science questions and about how governments operate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</p> <p>A key outcome will be the delivery of an analysis of governments’ online presence that can be used to prepare an academic research report and potentially a government engagement paper and/or a piece in <i>The Conversation</i>.</p>
<b>Suitable for:</b>	<p>This project is open to applications from students with a background in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social science with an interest in learning digital research methods</li> <li>• Information technology with an interest in social science research</li> </ul> <p>Applicants must have an ability to use or strong enthusiasm to learn coding in the research platform, R Studio, and be comfortable with basic statistics.</p>
<b>Primary Supervisor:</b>	Associate Professor Paul Henman <a href="mailto:p.henman@uq.edu.au">p.henman@uq.edu.au</a> 07 3443 3142
<b>Further info:</b>	Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the supervisor prior to applying.