

municate serious news, findings, and insights. It's not a perfect match.

Universities are massive repositories of knowledge, research, wisdom, and expertise. But a lot of that stays behind a wall of their own making—there are the walled garden and ivory tower metaphors, and in more literal terms, the paywall. Broadly speaking, universities are part of society but disconnected from it. They are an enormous public resource but not that good at presenting their expertise to the wider public.

Andrew believed he could help connect academics back into the public arena, and maybe help society find solutions to big problems. He thought about pairing professional editors with university and research experts, working one-on-one to refine everything from story structure to headline, captions, and quotes. The editors could help turn something that is academic into something understandable and readable. And this would be a key difference from traditional journalism—the subject matter expert would get a chance to check the article and give final approval before it is published. Compare this with reporters just picking and choosing the quotes and writing whatever they want.

The people he spoke to liked this idea, and Andrew embarked on raising money and support with the help of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the University of Technology Sydney, and the University of Western Australia. These founding partners saw the value of an independent information channel that would also showcase the talent and knowledge of the university and research sector. With their help, in 2011, the Conversation, was launched as an independent news site in Australia. Everything published in the Conversation is openly licensed with Creative Commons.

The Conversation is founded on the belief that underpinning a functioning democracy is

access to independent, high-quality, informative journalism. The Conversation's aim is for people to have a better understanding of current affairs and complex issues—and hopefully a better quality of public discourse. The Conversation sees itself as a source of trusted information dedicated to the public good. Their core mission is simple: to provide readers with a reliable source of evidence-based information.

Andrew worked hard to reinvent a methodology for creating reliable, credible content. He introduced strict new working practices, a charter, and codes of conduct.¹ These include fully disclosing who every author is (with their relevant expertise); who is funding their research; and if there are any potential or real conflicts of interest. Also important is where

ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS AN ISSUE OF EQUALITY—EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS, LIKE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER.

the content originates, and even though it comes from the university and research community, it still needs to be fully disclosed.

The Conversation does not sit behind a paywall. Andrew believes access to information is an issue of equality—everyone should have access, like access to clean water. The Conversation is committed to an open and free Internet. Everyone should have free access to their content, and be able to share it or republish it.

Creative Commons help with these goals; articles are published with the Attribution-NoDerivs license (CC BY-ND). They're freely available for others to republish elsewhere as long as attribution is given and the content is not edited. Over five years, more than twenty-two thousand sites have republished their content. The Conversation website gets about 2.9 million unique views per month,