

THE CONVERSATION

Impact Through Media Collaboration

May 2013



- Business model imploding:
- Dumbed down
- Infomania
- Senior + specialist journalists
leaving →
- Trust eroded



GONE...

Adam Cresswell, health editor The Australian

Leigh Dayton, science writer The Australian

Deborah Smith, science editor SMH

Mark Metherell, health correspondent SMH,
The Age

Julie Robotham, medical editor SMH

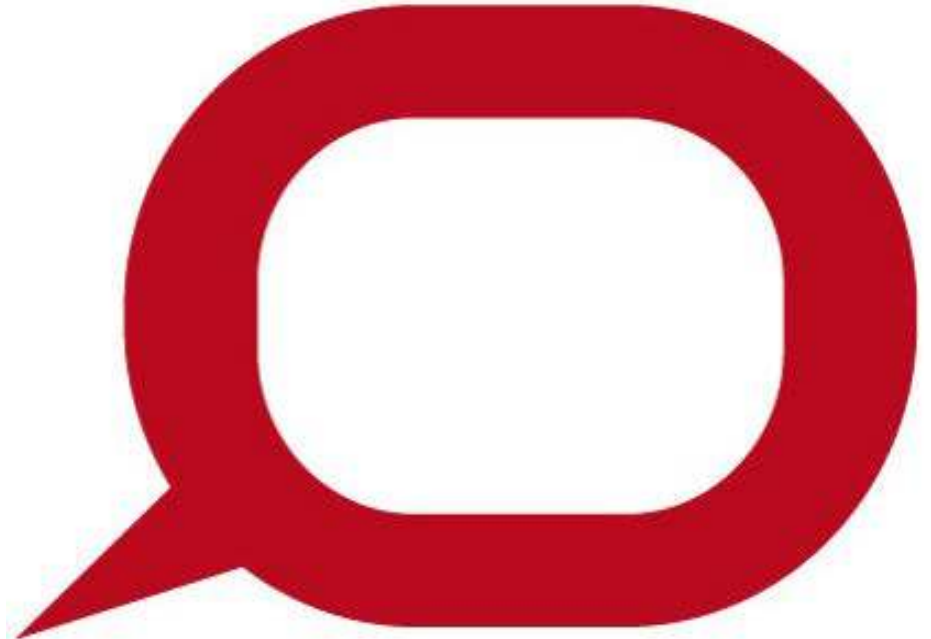
Found! The last untapped gold mine



- Credible and independent info and experts
- Thousands of specialists
- Turn the university into a Giant Newsroom!

The Conversation Charter

- **Unlock the knowledge** and expertise of researchers and academics to provide the public with clarity and insight into society's biggest problems
- Give experts a **greater voice** in shaping scientific, cultural and intellectual agendas by providing a trusted platform that values and promotes new thinking and evidence-based research
- Provide a **fact-based and editorially-independent** forum, free of commercial or political bias



Pipeline of information direct to the public

- 15 commissioning editors
- Global university networks
- State of the art site: direct to the public
- Editorial Board: senior academics, bound by a charter

Experience and passionate editors



The Conversation
Newsroom

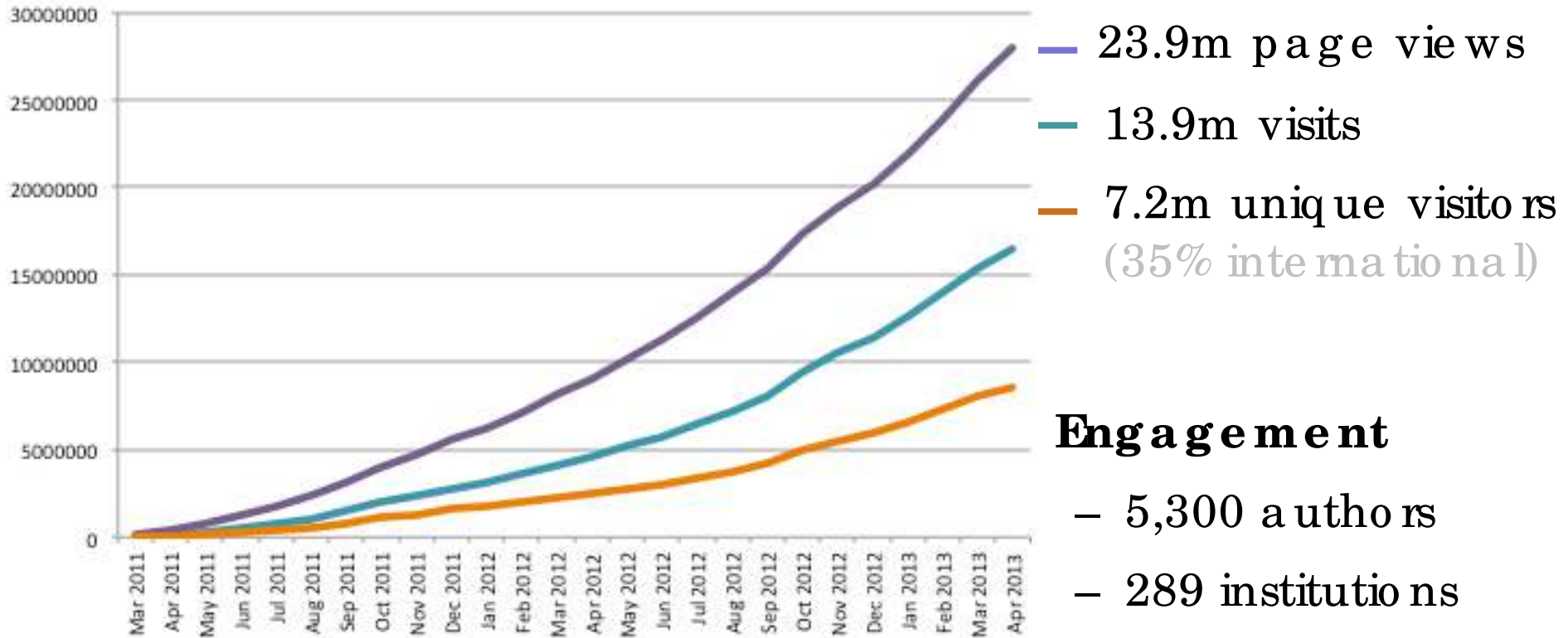
Academics into journals



- Engaged in the news cycle
- Relevant, timely, and independent
- Publish 7.00am and 2.30pm and whenever we get the good stuff
- Accessible free via highly useable, interactive website

How we're doing – KPIs

• Traffic and reach

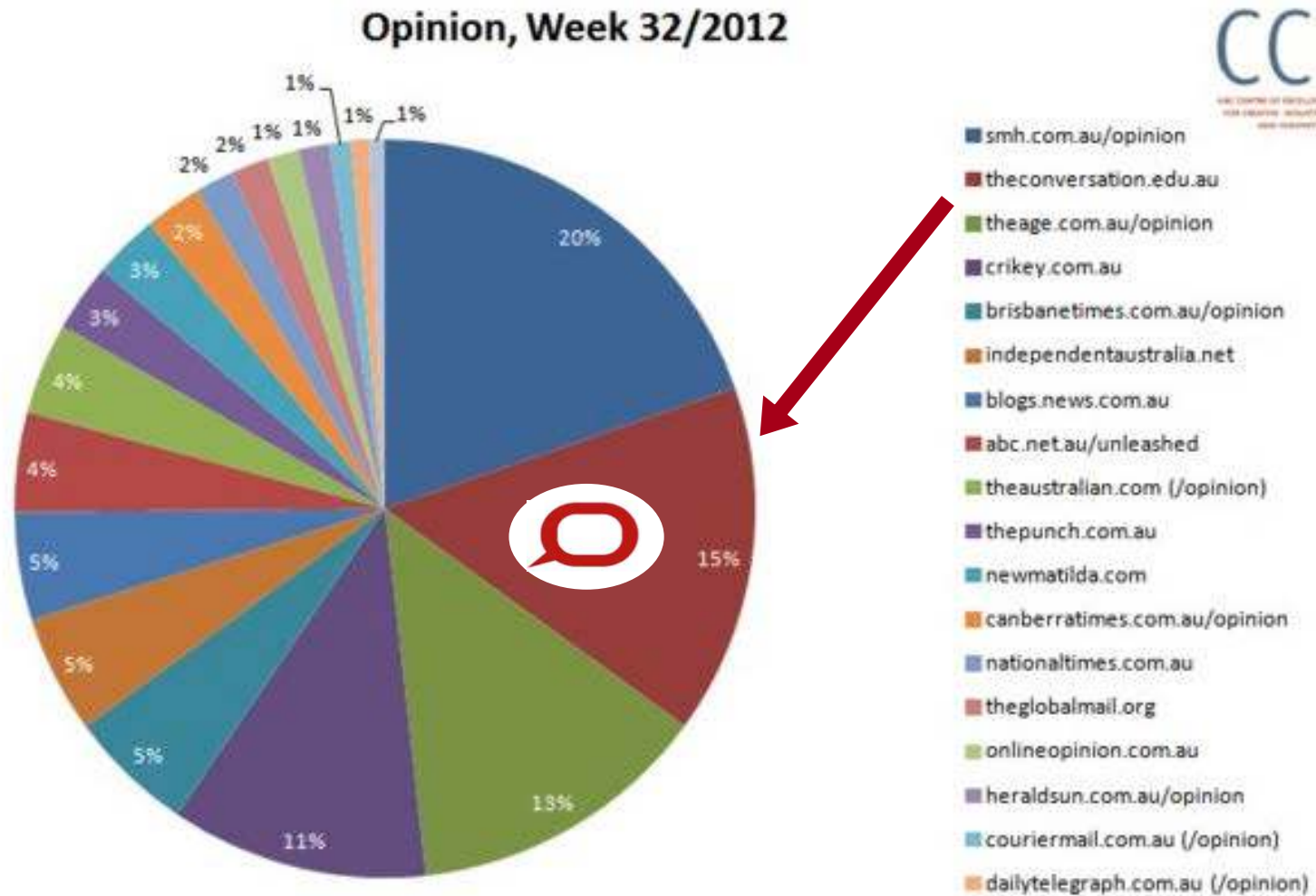


Engagement

- 5,300 authors
- 289 institutions
- 10,000 articles
- 125k+ comments
- 5K+ republications

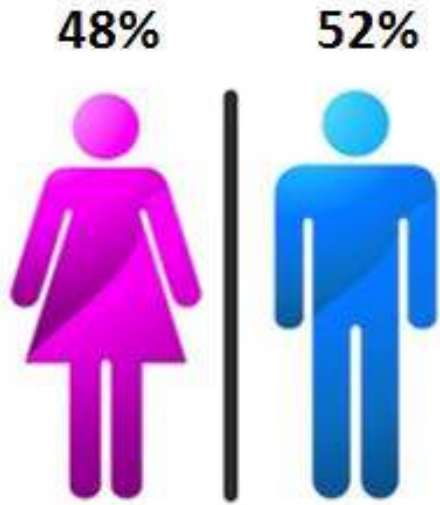
Source: Google analytics.
Last Updated: 1 May 2013

Most Tweeted Oz Opinion sites



Source: Australian Twitter News Circulation Index

Smart, engaged community



90% have an undergraduate degree or higher

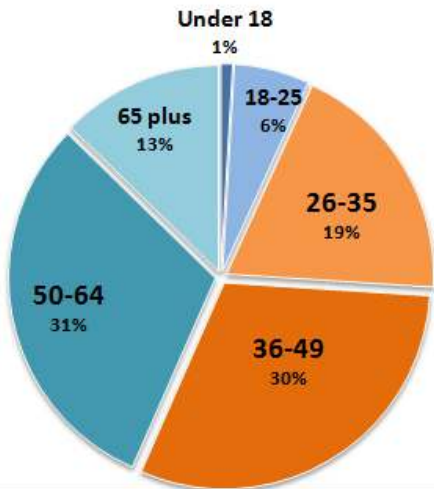
47% hold a postgraduate degree

80% are employed

62% have household income over \$100,000

30% live in a household that owns a business

70%
are not academics



Seeding the media



- 58% of articles republished
- 43% of authors contacted by media

Google news



Flipboard

factiva®
Dow Jones & Reuters

SBS



redd



Australian
Doctor.

HUFFPOST SCIENCE

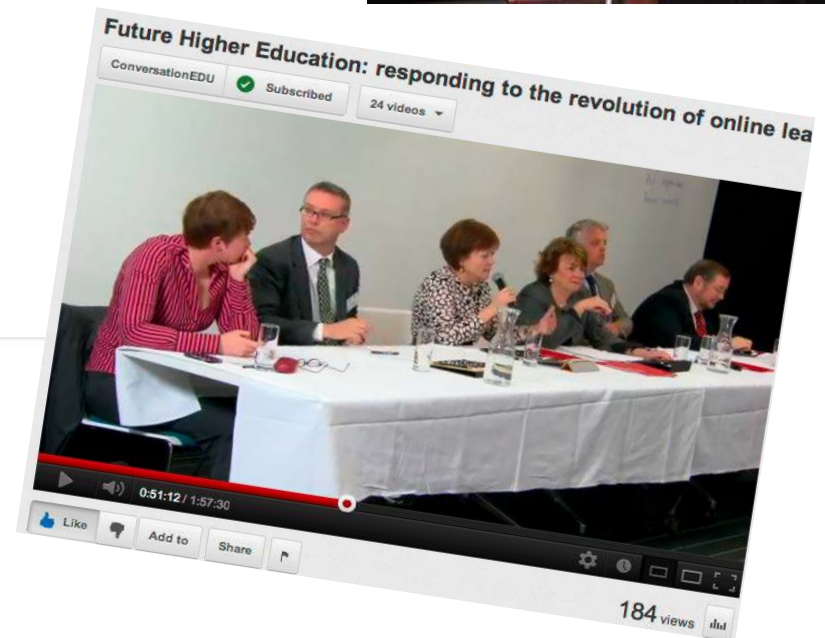


Case studies: Policy development

- Future of Higher Ed: panel of TC authors in discussion with Minister Evans. Opportunity to shape policy debate
- Author callout, 120+ submissions
- Series 50K readers; 2K comments, FB and Twitter interactions
- 5 panelists presenting to room of 50, with 4K in live-stream and a Twitter debate that trended.




Trendsmap Melbourne @TrendsMelbourne
#futurehighered is now trending in #Melbourne
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Expand



Case studies: Viral international pickup


- 250K views, 32K on facebook
- Most widely-read article
- Re-tweeted by: Richard Dawkins, Ricky Gervais, Tim Minchin & others

AUTHOR
 **Patrick Stokes**
Lecturer in Philosophy at Deakin University

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
Patrick Stokes does not work for, consult to, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has no relevant affiliations.


The Conversation provides independent analysis and commentary from academics and researchers.

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ARTICLES BY THIS AUTHOR

No, you're not entitled to your opinion



Hobart 4/11 Launceston 1/11 Perth 8/14 21:53 AEST

The ABC's popular Q And A show revolves around opinion. But not all opinions are of equal value.

Every year, I try to do at least two things with my students at least once. First, I make a point of addressing them as "philosophers" – a bit cheesy, but hopefully it **encourages active learning**.

Secondly, I say something like this: "I'm sure you've heard the

230 Comments
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Tweet 4.7k
Share 31.9k



Richard Dawkins @RichardDawkins

No you're not entitled to your opinion. Or you're not entitled to have it taken seriously unless you have evidence. bit.ly/OaLtxl

Expand

7 Oct

Seeding mainstream media

43% of our authors have received media requests as a result of writing for *The Conversation* (Source: 2012 Annual Survey)



“The Conversation is the next generation of crowd-sourcing – better focus, better crowd! I have done two radio interviews, from Brisbane and WA on the back of stuff I’ve published. If the University is looking for opportunities for exposure, this is up there.”

- James AJ Heathers, PhD candidate, University of Sydney



“Thanks very much for publicity in The Conversation, it led to 5 interviews yesterday. I did two interviews with ABC that arose from the piece and was interviewed for Channel 10 and for The Age.”

- Clive Phillips, Professor, School of Animal Welfare and Ethics, UQ



“The last piece went quite well and I hope this one doesn’t go quite as well, as I have some marking to do.”*

- John Hadley, Research Lecturer, University of Western Sydney

* More than 25 media outlets picked up Hadley’s April 12 article on biodiversity loss

A cautionary tale

- Catherine Fowler, a Professor from the University of Technology in Sydney, gave a talk about raising infants
- It included a video of what a child would experience in a shopping mall in a forward facing pram
- Told a journalist about her research

Acautio nary tale

Dean Ritchie Andrew Bolt

News Sport Entertainment Business Money Travel Lifestyle Opinion Video body+soul
Breaking News Sydney/NSW National World Weird Classmate Tributes Galleries Photo Sales Weather

Big pram face-off: academic says outward-facing prams are cruel

By Rosie Squires *The Sunday Telegraph* August 21, 2011 12:00AM A+ A- Share

Recommend Send Be the first of your friends to recommend this. Share 0 tweet



A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, smiling warmly at the camera. She is leaning over a grey baby pram. Inside the pram, a baby wearing a red vest is looking towards the camera with a happy expression. The background shows a grassy area and trees under a clear blue sky.

They're free so sign your business up **now ▶**

A c a u t i o n a r y t a l e

Inward-facing prams cost "10 times more"

Outward-facing prams "terrifying"

"More important they are loved, fed"

PARENTS who push their children in outward-facing prams are cruel and selfish, a leading Australian child health academic says.

But the controversial claims, made by Professor Cathrine Fowler from the University of Technology Sydney, have been shot down by the country's best-known midwife, *Baby Love* author Robin Barker.

Ms Barker says, as long as babies are loved and fed, the direction they face when in a pram is irrelevant.

Professor Fowler, who will give a lecture on raising babies at UTS on Tuesday, said strollers that point children in the direction of travel are isolating, stressful and terrifying.

"Imagine if you were strapped to someone's chest with your legs and arms flailing, heading with no control, in a busy shopping centre. It would be terrifying. It is the same for our children," Professor Fowler, a mother of two, said.

A c a u t i o n a r y t a l e

- “I e m p h a s i s e d t h e n e e d t o b e s e n s i t i v e w i t h t h e s t o r y a s m y i n t e n t w a s n o t t o m a k e p a r e n t s f e e l g u i l t y .”
- “M u c h o f w h a t I h a d s a i d w a s t a k e n o u t o f c o n t e x t .”
- “I f e l t t h a t I ’ d b e e n s e t - u p b y t h e j o u r n a l i s t .”

Acautio nary tale

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25 August 2011, 6.35am AEST

Misquoted: how an innocent interview about raising babies led to hate mail

AUTHOR



Cathrine Fowler

Professor & Tresillian Chair in Child & Family Health, Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Health at University of Technology, Sydney

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Cathrine Fowler receives funding from the ARC.

The University of Technology, Sydney is a Founding Partner of The Conversation.

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TAGS

[Childhood development](#)

A cautionary tale

- Journalists have an agenda
- But academics can't withdraw – they've a vital role in informing public discussion
- The Conversation aims to provide a solution via a safe publishing environment

The new media ecosystem – The Conversation

- Hear directly from real experts on issues of the day
- Use the Conversation to dip your toe in the water and build profile
- Safe publishing environment
- Arguments based on evidence
- Engagement

Story selection

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SPACE TECH ENVIRONMENT HEALTH LIFE PHYSICS&MATH SCIENCE IN SOCIETY

One Per Cent

Taking the sweat out of technology

US seizes Osama bin Laden's hard drives

18:10 3 May 2011

Computing Military

Jacob Aron, technology reporter

What secrets lie inside? (Image: KeystoneUSA-ZUMA/Rex Features)

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NewScientist TV

turn on tune in explore

welcome to NewScientist TV

- Saw story online
- “What will the US government do with the hard drives?”
- “If they are encrypted, what then?”
- Let’s find an encryption expert

Tracking down an expert

- Consult our expert database
- Google search (e.g. “encryption university Australia”)
- Contact university media offices

Prof. Jennifer Seberry – University of Wollongong



- Been working in computer security for 30 years
- Involved at design stage of AES-256 encryption scheme (which bin Laden may have utilised)

Making contact

- Initial phone call to Prof. Seberry to discuss the story idea
- Agreed to write a story for us by the following morning
- Wrote her a “brief” ...

Briefing the expert

Hi Jennifer,

Thanks again for having a chat just now. I appreciate your time and interest in helping out with this piece.

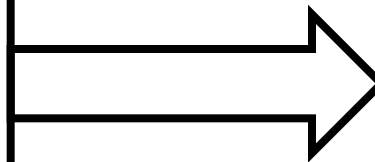
As I mentioned, the site I work for is called The Conversation (<http://theconversation.edu.au>) and we're a new online publication working with the research sector to foster a more informed public debate.

In the Science/Tech section we're looking at the news that the US has seized Osama bin Laden's hard drives (<http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/onepercent/2011/05/us-seizes-osama-bin-ladens-har.html>), trying to put the news into a bit of context for our readers and explaining the difficulty of decrypting data encrypted with the AES-256 encryption scheme.

As I mentioned, we'd be looking for something quite short (~400 words) written quite conversationally and even off the top of your head. Our audience is a general, interested and reasonably well educated one, but without any specific training in computer science.

Here's what it would be great for the piece to touch on:

- What the AES-256 encryption is and where it's come from
- Why it's impossible to crack
- Why rumours of "backdoor" decryption methods are completely ridiculous



“This is what we’d like from the piece”

Ideally, from our point of view, we'd be looking for as quick a turnaround on this piece as possible so if you could get back to me ASAP (either way) that would be great, just so that I can track down someone else if you can't write the piece for us.

Thanks again for your time Jennifer and I hope to speak with you again soon.

Regards,

Matt de Neef
Assistant Section Editor, The Conversation

The next morning ...

Jennifer got back to us at 10.50am the following morning with a (very) short piece:

It has been reported that Osama bin Laden's hard drives have been seized.

These are said to be encrypted with AES256. What is that?

The US Department of Commerce in 1997 called for cryptologists around the world to submit candidates for the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES).

Our research group submitted an entry, LOKI, but it was quickly removed from contention in the open, world wide competition that ensued.

There were a number of international conferences and the final winner was chosen by the cryptographic world community. The winner was Rijndael, invented by two Belgian cryptologists, Joan Daemen and Vincent Rijmen.

Since so many ~~experts~~ have analysed, taught the algorithm and because of the openness of the process to choose the AES standard I do not believe there are any "backdoors". The only way I see to break the encryption is to use a complete search on hundreds of thousands of specially built machines.

This I believe is not feasible.

159 words! ☹

A bit more ... ?

- We were looking for more than 150 words, so :

It has been reported that Osama bin Laden's hard drives have been seized, *hard drives that could conceivably contain ...*

These are said to be encrypted with AES256. What is that? *(Can you put this into context for us – roughly speaking, how does encryption work and how does this particular scheme work? How much better than the competition is it? Who uses it? Eg. US government, banks, Wikileaks?)*

(Can you spell out that this code is uncrackable and explain why? Will this be the case even in the future, as technology improves?)

The US Department of Commerce in 1997 called for cryptologists around the world to submit candidates for the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES). *In my capacity as ... I was part of a research group that submitted an entry, LOKI (Can you touch on what this is?), but it was quickly removed from contention in the open, world wide competition that ensued. (Why was your entry removed from the competition?)*

There were a number of international conferences and the final winner was chosen *(when was this?)* by the cryptographic world community. The winner was Rijndael *(Is this the name of the algorithm that AES uses? It would be great if you could explain this a little further)*, invented by two Belgian cryptologists, Joan Daemen and Vincent Rijmen. *(Which went on to AES256????)*

There have been suggestions that the US government was involved in the creation of this encryption scheme, and engineering a 'backdoor', allowing them to decrypt any data encrypted using this method.

I personally don't believe such a "backdoor" exists for the following reasons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Text in red = “please give us more information!”

Since so many experts have analysed, taught the algorithm and because of the openness of the process to choose the AES standard I do not believe there are any "backdoors".

The only way I see to break the encryption is to use a complete search *(Can you spell out what this is and what it would involve?)* on hundreds of thousands of specially built machines. *(Do such machines exist and if so, how long would it take, theoretically, given the potential value of the information in this case? Is it likely that resources would be pushed in this direction?)*

This I believe is not feasible.

(We need something to finish such as... What does this mean for the information on bin Laden's hard drives? In fact, what might this information be? We may never know?)

Take -two ...

At 12.50pm Jennifer sent through a revised version incorporating our suggestions:

It has been reported that Osama bin Laden's hard drives have been seized, hard drives that could conceivably contain information regarding the membership, funding and future plans of El Qaeda. Knowledge of this information would enormously help anti terrorism. These hard drives are said to be encrypted with AES256. The AES is the current world "Advanced Data Standard".

Computer encryption works by taking data in binary form, that is written with ones and zeros, i.e.bits, breaking it into blocks of length 256 bits and then inputting in into an algorithm, which is like a black box, which causes as much confusion as possible using a "secret key" which is also 256 bits of binary data. Knowing this key means that the data can be unencrypted and so returned to it's original form. That is why it is kept secret. Data encryption using the AES is ubiquitous. It is used by banks, business, governments, and on your own computer to protect network links.

A look at the animated version of how the AES algorithm works written by Enrique Zabala from Paragray

http://www.cs.bc.edu/~straubin/cs381-05/blockciphers/rijndael_ingles2004.swf or

<http://blog.ultrassecreto.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/projetofinal.html>

gives an idea of the complication of the AES encryption process.

The US Department of Commerce in 1997 called for cryptologists around the world to submit candidates for the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES). As Director of the Centre for Computer Security Research at the University of Wollongong, I was part of a research group that submitted an entry, LOKI, a symmetric encryption algorithm based on our research. LOKI was quickly removed from contention in the open, world wide competition that ensued as other researchers found ways to make it easier to decrypt than AES.

Part of the five year standardization process included a number of international conferences, many research articles and computer testing by international researchers. The final winner was chosen by the cryptographic world community and announced by the US Government as its Federal standard on 26th May 2002. The winner was a symmetric encryption algorithm called Rijndael invented by two Belgian cryptologists whose native language is Flemish, Joan Daemon and Vincent Rijmen. The name Rijndael was chosen as a combination of the authors' names as a gentle poke at the fact that no one can pronounce names in Flemish (the other Belgian national languages is French). It was the Rijnael version that uses 256 bits that is the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES256) used today. There have been suggestions that the US government was involved in the creation of this encryption scheme, and engineering a 'backdoor', allowing them to decrypt any data encrypted using this method.

I personally don't believe such a "backdoor" exists for the following reasons:

1. the open process by which candidates were submitted and analysed by the world cryptographic community;
2. The fact that it has been widely accepted by all other governments (and apparently bin Laden)
3. The process used in the encryption process which is both "state of the art" and "best practice".

598 words 😊

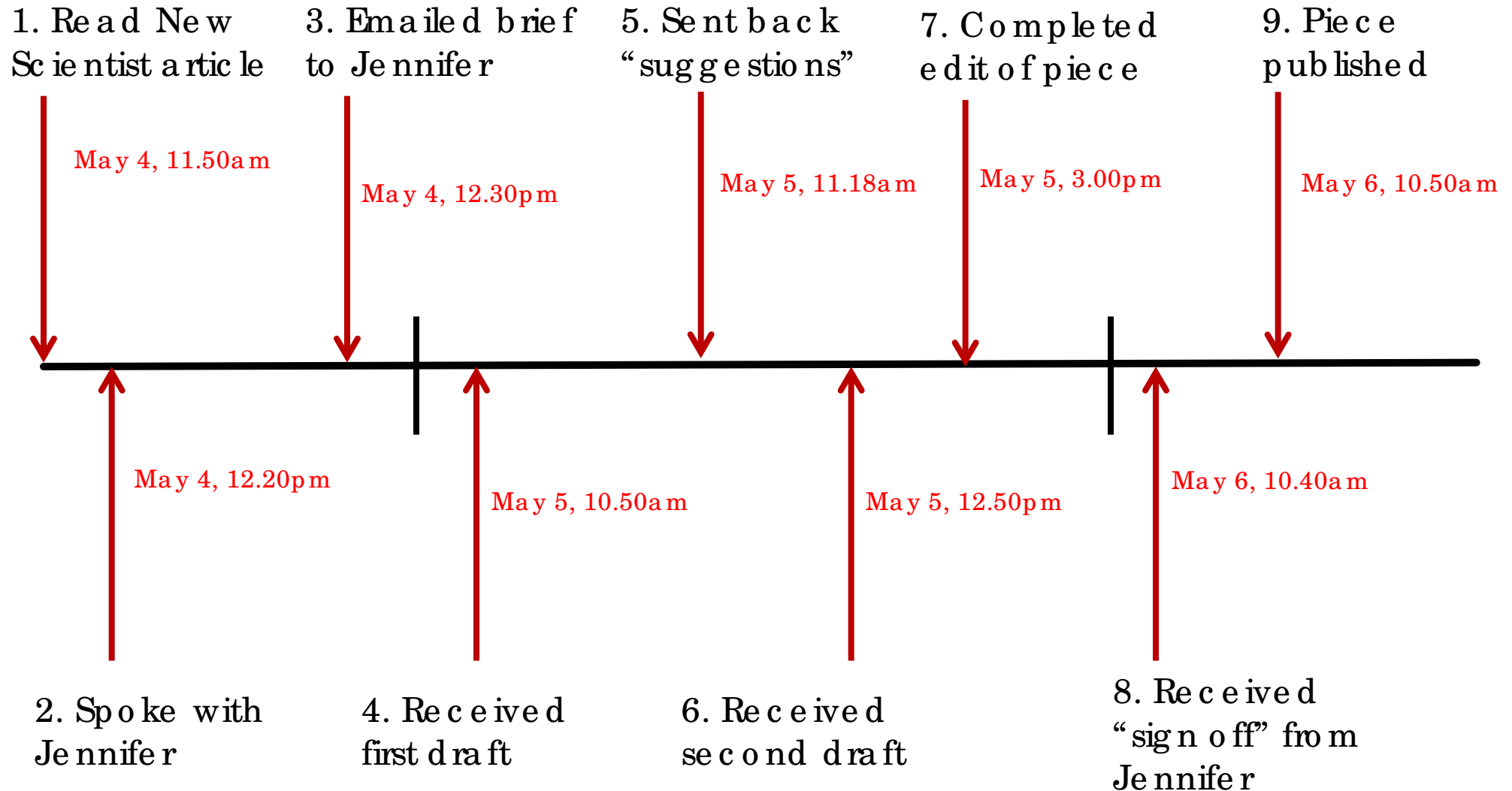
The only way I see to break the encryption is to use a complete search, that is to try all possible keys, on hundreds of thousands of specially built machines. Such machines do not exist and if they did they would take many, many times the length of time this universe will exist to carry out such a search. This I believe is not feasible.

This means we will not be able to crack the encryption algorithm or find the key used by bin Laden. So we will have to rely on other kinds of information to find out El Qaeda's future plans

The ball's back in our court ...

- Spent some time editing the piece
- Sent it back to her for final sign off

Publication timeline



Here's one I prepared earlier ...

Published: May 6, 2011

Cracking bin Laden's computer code: unlikely

AUTHOR



Jennifer Seberry

Professor of Computer Security at University of Wollongong

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Jennifer Seberry receives funding from the ARC.

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Recovering information from Osama's hard drives may be impossible. [wokka/Thinkr](#)

It has been reported that Osama bin Laden's hard drives have been seized, hard drives that could conceivably contain information regarding the membership, funding and future plans of al-Qaeda.

Information of this type would help anti-terrorism agencies enormously.

The hard drives were recovered from bin Laden's compound in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad and are said to be encrypted with a encryption method known as AES-256.

AES-256 is the current world standard for data encryption and is used by the likes of Wikileaks and the US Government to encrypt sensitive information.

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TAGS

[Osama bin Laden](#)

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- Helps raise research funds
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** Academic writing opportunities*

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Dr. Sean Rintel

*Lecturer in Strategic Communication
School of Journalism & Communication
The University of Queensland*

18 articles
45k readers

If, as a society,
we value academic
engagement, then
how do we recognise
and reward it?

Why Engage: The triple helix, be warned!

- Government funders want value for money
- Already measuring teaching and research
- Will measure engagement or "impact"
- A consideration in funding
- UK and US are already measuring
- Go8 and ATN univs working new measures

Get involved!

- Create a profile
- Pitch to our editors

Pitch an Article Idea

In 100 words or less, tell us what article should be a part of The Conversation. Please include your contact details so we can get in touch.

- I'm an academic or researcher with relevant expertise and want to write the article.
- I'd like to suggest an expert(s) to write this article.
- I'm just interested in seeing this covered.

Your Email

[Pitch Idea](#)

Peter C. Doherty
Laureate Professor at University of Melbourne
Summary
Professor Peter Doherty shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1996 with Swiss colleague Rolf Zinkernagel, for their discovery of how the immune system recognises virus-infected cells. He was Australian of the Year in 1997, and has since been commuting between St Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Melbourne. His research is mainly in the area of defence against viruses. He regularly devotes time to delivering public lectures, writing articles for newspapers and magazines and participating in radio discussions.
Peter Doherty graduated from the University of Queensland in 1961 and became a veterinary officer. Moving to the University of Edinburgh Medical School, he qualified to win a Nobel Prize.
Peter C. Doherty is a Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne.
pcc@unimelb.edu.au

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pcc@unimelb.edu.au
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Ian Frazer
Director, Diamantina Institute for Immunology and Cancer Research at University of Queensland
Summary
Professor Ian Frazer is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Director of Research of the Translational Research Institute (TRI) Pty Ltd in Brisbane, Australia. In his role as CEO, Professor Frazer is charged with leading the \$354 million TRI to achieve its mission of being Australia's first institute, and one of only a few in the world, to research, trial and manufacture breakthrough drugs in the one location, once construction is complete in 2012. The TRI will accommodate up to 650 researchers from the four TRI partners: The University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Mater Medical Research Institute and the Princess Alexandra Hospital.
Professor Frazer is the former Director of The University of Queensland Diamantina Institute (UQDI), a research institute of The University of Queensland at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane. He was trained as a renal physician and clinical immunologist in Edinburgh, Scotland before emigrating to the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and Eliza Hall Institute of 1981 to Melbourne, Australia, to continue his clinical training and to pursue studies in viral immunology and autoimmunity at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research with Professor Ian Mackay. In 1985 he moved to Brisbane to establish an active research program at UQDI and his research program with The University of Queensland and immunotherapeutic research with The University of Queensland and he holds research fellowships with the University of Queensland and the University of Queensland.
ian.frazer@tri.edu.au
0733461905
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RECENT ARTICLES
10 July 2012
Catch cancer? No thanks, I'd rather have a shot

Gustav Nossal
Professor Emeritus at Walter and Eliza Hall Institute
Summary
GUSTAV NOSSAL was born in Austria in 1931, and came to Australia in 1939. In 1965 he was appointed Director of The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, a position he held from 1965-1996.
Sir Gustav is currently Professor Emeritus within the Department of Pathology, The University of Melbourne; a consultant for the World Health Organization and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and a Principal of Foursight Associates Pty Ltd. He was formerly Chairman of The Global Foundation Advisory Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1996 to 2000).
He was knighted in 1977, made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1989 and appointed Australian of the Year 2000.
Experience
• Director, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research 1965 – 1996
• Professor of Medical Biology, The University of Melbourne 1965 – 1996
Education
• The University of Melbourne, PhD, 1960

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