

# THE CONVERSATION

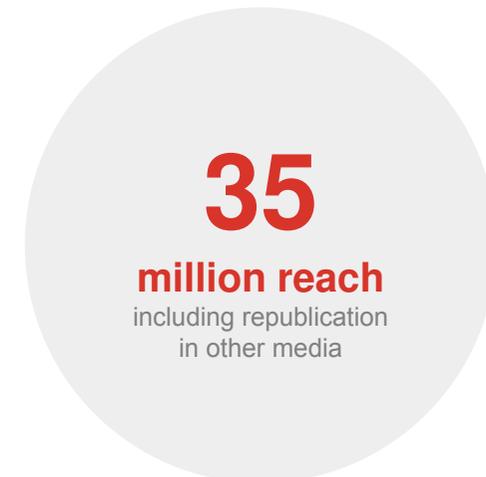
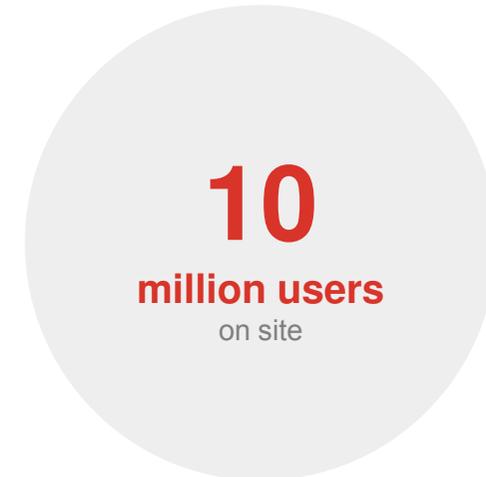
Academic rigour, journalistic flair

- Our team of professional editors work with academics to unlock their knowledge for the wider public.
- We seed the mainstream media with expert voices.
- We are focused on public interest journalism.



# TRUST IS THE KEY TO GROWTH

- The Conversation was founded in Australia, now with editions based in the UK, US, Canada, South Africa, France & Indonesia.
- All our stories are free to read or republish – which is how we reach millions more readers through global media outlets.
- More than 80% of our readers are non-academics.
- Academics get final sign-off on all edits, so it's accurate.



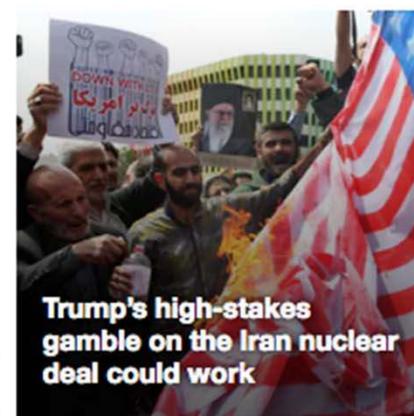


## As the details emerge on Australia's new space agency, we (might) finally have lift-off

Andrew Dempster, UNSW



## How an Australian scientist tried to stop the US plan to monopolise the nuclear arms race



## Trump's high-stakes gamble on the Iran nuclear deal could work



## Post-budget poll wrap: Labor has equal best Newspoll budget result, gains in Ipsos, but trails in Longman



## To get conservative climate contrarians to really listen, try speaking their language



## The ethics of 'securitising' Australian cyberspace

# 22,000+ republishers, here & internationally

The Washington Post  
theguardian

JakartaGlobe  
Your City. Your World. Your Indonesia.

FORTUNE

Newsweek

物联网世界  
iotworld.com.cn

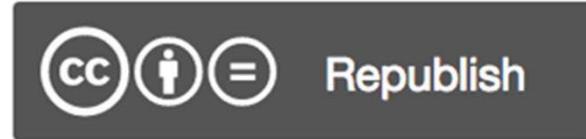
hindustantimes

TIME



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SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN™

THE CONVERSATION

POLICY & ETHICS

## The Trillion-Dollar Question Obama Did Not Answer in Hiroshima

Nuclear physicists wonder: Should we downsize our nuclear arsenal?

CNN Regions • U.S. Africa Americas Asia China Europe Middle East Opinion International Edition + menu

### Why the world is wary of China's 'great wall of sand' in the sea

THE CONVERSATION Clive Schofield  
Updated 0616 GMT (1416 HKT) May 14, 2015



Top stories  
Heard granted restraining order against Depp  
Pro-Trump, anti-Trump groups clash in San Diego



# POST PUBLICATION RESULTS

After writing an article

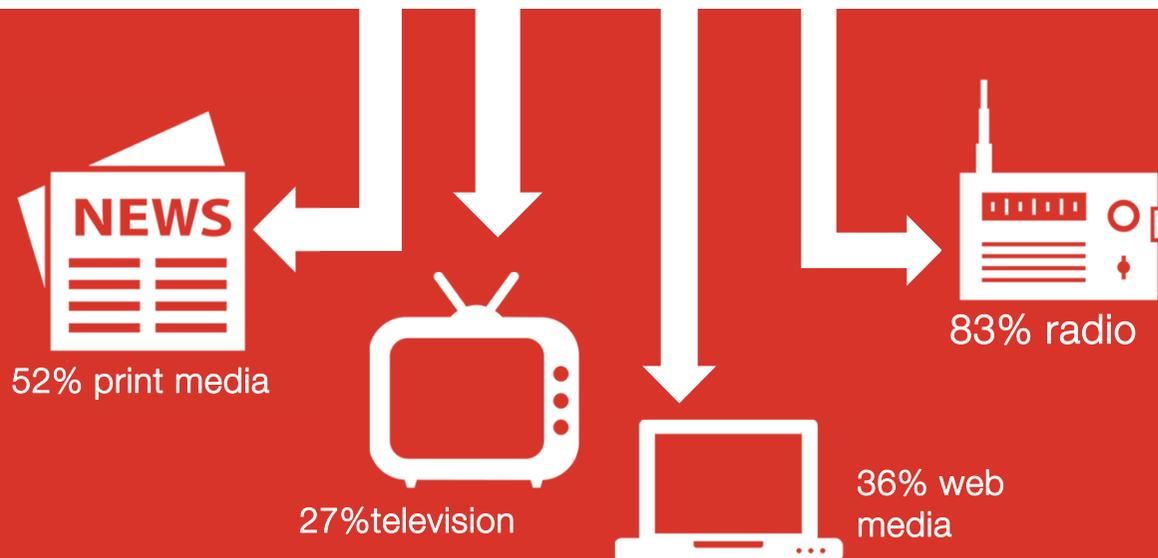
**66%** of authors are contacted by media



10% contacted by business or industry to consult



13% invited to speak at conferences



100% of academics agree:

“Getting published by  
The Conversation is  
useful to my career.”

# ARC ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

An article published by The Conversation, or media interviews, can be evidence of research engagement beyond academia.

The ARC says “potential indicators for optional use in the engagement narrative” include:

- Book sales
- Serving on external advisory boards
- Consultations with community groups, professional/practice organisations, govt
- Consultation with/advice to Government
- Expert witness in court cases
- Contributions/submissions to public enquiries on industry-research related issues
- Public lectures, seminars, open days, school visits
- Presentations to practitioner communities
- Established networks and relationships with research users
- Public lectures, policy engagements, media engagements, community events)
- Media coverage of exhibitions and new works
- Metrics which capture social media activity

# SUCCESS STORIES



**Who wins from 'Big Gambling' in Australia?**



**Martin Young**

Associate Professor, School of Business and Tourism, [Southern Cross University](#)

**19**

 Articles

**93,834**

 Readers

“Soon after I started writing about our gambling research for The Conversation, I was invited to present at an event in Melbourne with all the key regulatory stakeholders. **I assumed they'd know nothing about our project – but was surprised to find nearly everyone in the room had read my Conversation articles.** Some state government regulators even came up afterwards to say, 'We really like what you're doing with The Conversation, please keep writing' ... Instead of ending up in a government report that isn't read, many tens of thousands of people have read about our findings. That's a wonderful return for our state and federal government funding.

# Global exposure creates new opportunities



“ I was amazed by the response to my article on Papua New Guinea’s worsening drought, including seeing it republished by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. I really appreciated how you helped craft it into a good piece that’s been read by policy practitioners around the world, including in the US, PNG, UK and beyond.

Dr Mike Bourke, Visiting Fellow,  
Australian National University



“ The Conversation has given me an unexpected and lasting platform for exposure. Off the back of my articles, I secured a book deal with Cambridge publishing; was featured alongside six of the nation’s top education experts in another book about the transformation of education in Australia. A university in Japan used my work for an entrance exam, and teachers are using my work as a basis for classroom discussion. Each time I write I have a handful of follow up media interviews. All this has really helped “ build my public profile.

Misty Adoniou, Senior Lecturer in  
Language, Literacy and TESL.  
University of Canberra.



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS



“ My Conversation articles have directly led to invitations to speak at North American universities, including Columbia University and the University of British Columbia. My circle of professional and other contacts has also expanded.

David Hodgkinson, Associate Professor of  
Law, University of Western Australia

# The academic value of sharing what you know

## THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigour, journalistic flair

Arts + Culture Business + Economy Education Environment + Energy Health + Medicine Politics + Society Science + Technology

### How to keep your house cool in a heatwave

January 14, 2014 10:28am AEDT



**“As a first-time Conversation author, the results far exceeded my expectations.”**

As well as attracting **180,000 readers**, this January 2014 article led to:

- Talkback on ABC Radio National
- Interviews on ABC radio (Qld & NSW) + commercial radio (4BC)
- ABC 1 TV Breakfast interview



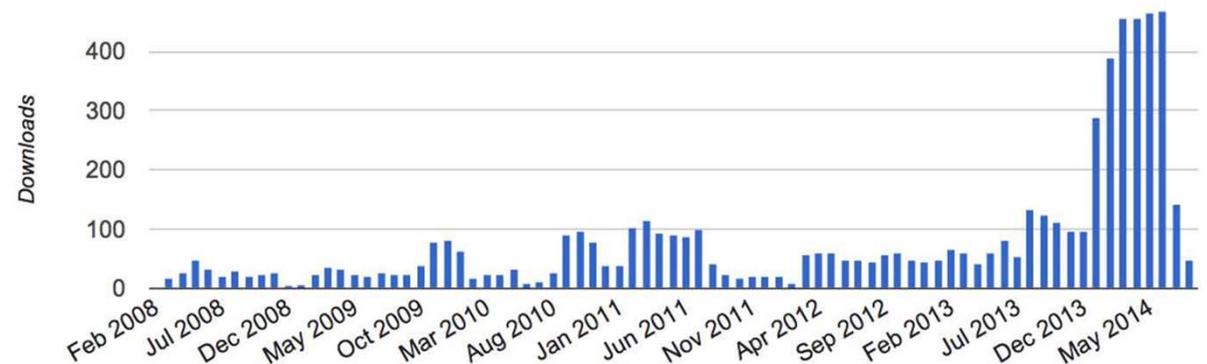
## Dr Wendy Miller

Science and Engineering Faculty,  
Chemistry, Physics, Mechanical Engineering,  
Energy and Process Engineering

QUT

That national media coverage resulted in:

- Very happy funding partners (govt & industry) + approaches from new potential funders
- Invitations to review for a high-rated journal; submit to another; and present at a conference
- **A lasting spike in Wendy’s publication downloads** (shown below, starting January 2014).



# Inside an author dashboard



**John Rolfe**

Deputy Dean of Research, School of Business and Law, CQUniversity Australia

[See CQUniversity Australia metrics](#)

## In Progress

You're not working on any articles

[Pitch an Article Idea](#)

## FAQs

- How do I start writing?
- I submitted a pitch. Now what?
- How do I handle interview requests from radio/TV?
- Other questions? [Contact us.](#)

## Published (6)

**NEWS INTERVIEWED** August 11, 2015  
**What does Australia's new 2030 climate target mean for the local coal industry?**

8,505 106 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

**ANALYSIS** July 30, 2015  
**Rinehart rides the beef boom as conditions set for higher prices**

2,819 10 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

**ANALYSIS** July 9, 2015  
**Controversial Watermark coal mine approved for New South Wales: experts respond**

8,004 133 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

**ANALYSIS** July 29, 2014  
**Carmichael mine is a game-changer for Australian coal**

9,331 111 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

**NEWS INTERVIEWED** July 29, 2014  
**Approval of Australia's largest coal mine ignores climate and water**

8,932 101 [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

## Reach

### Overview - All Articles

6

Articles

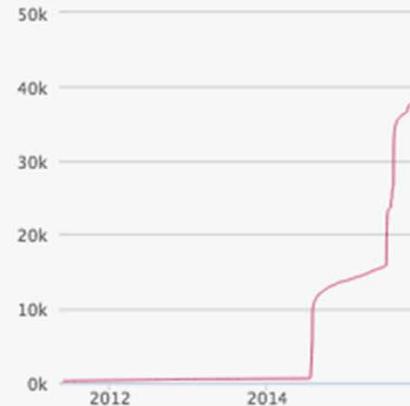
38,241

Readers

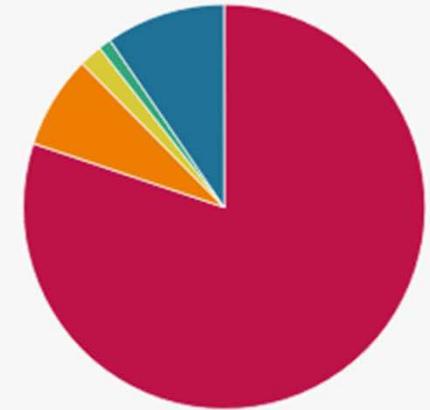
465

Comments

### Readers



### Country / Territory



■ Australia  
■ United States  
■ United Kingdom  
■ Canada  
■ other

### Publications

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| <a href="#">theconversation.com</a> | 30,295 |
| <a href="#">www.beefcentral.com</a> | 1,063  |
| <a href="#">www.thebull.com.au</a>  | 701    |

# In-built readability index: set to 16 years

## Readability

You are currently writing for high school students. This allows you to reach a wider audience.

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Word count:                 | 1,445 |
| Average words per sentence: | 16.61 |
| Syllables per word:         | 1.68  |
| Character count:            | 8,799 |

### How can I improve the readability of my article?

- Sentences with 17 words or less are easier to understand.
- Keep paragraphs to a maximum of three sentences.
- Eliminate acronyms.
- Avoid jargon.
- Avoid stringing together multiple prepositions.
- Don't verb nouns.



HeadLine

### In Conversation: Australia's ambassador to France, Stephen Brady, on terrorism and multicultural societies

7,445 words ● Readability

ident of the board of directors of the Conversation France, ady, Australia's ambassador to France, about Australia's role terrorism, and his own country's approach to creating a

the Australian people feel a particular solidarity with the the November attacks?\*

tacks on November 13 affected Australians very deeply. There of emotion that hadn't been seen since the Charlie Hebdo en, not since 9/11. All around the country, in cities and in uildings were lit up in French colours – the Sydney Opera se in Canberra, in Brisbane. There was an immediate public arity with France.

r this, I think, is that nearly one million Australians travel That's huge given that there are only 24 million of us. So, it t. Most Australians would identify with France through our re threatened, but they could also visualise the re the attacks took place; they could visualise the stadium. he deep revulsion.

95

Close

# When to write

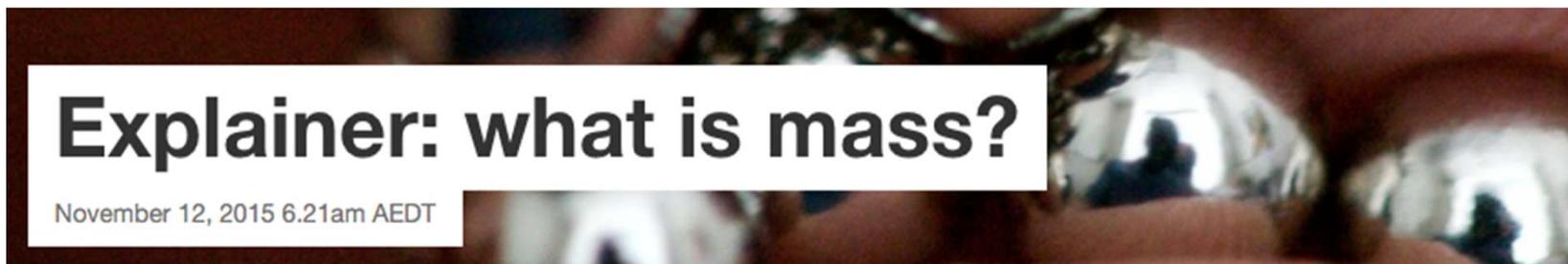
## New research



## News hook

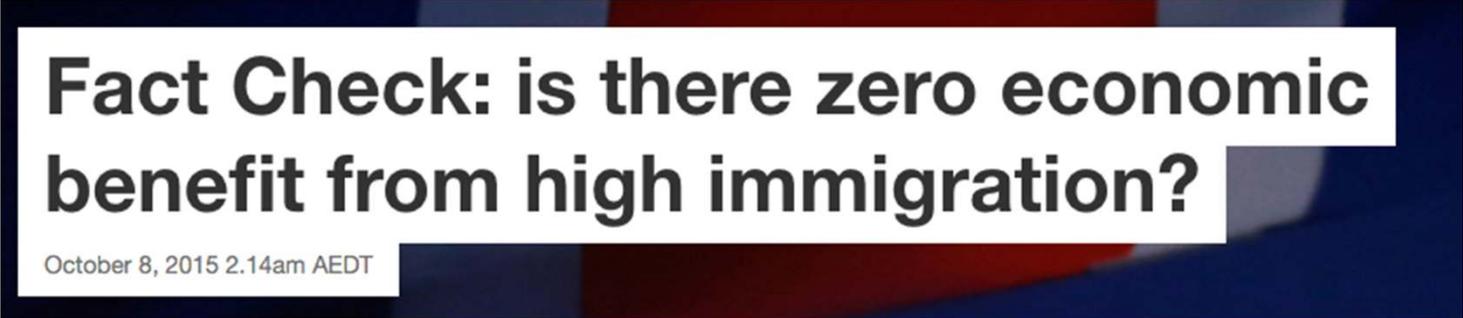


## An explainer



# When to write

Fact checking a politician or influential figure



**Fact Check: is there zero economic benefit from high immigration?**

October 8, 2015 2.14am AEDT

A fresh (sometimes contrarian) take on an old issue



**Do we need more police, or are there better ways to cut crime?**

January 15, 2016 6.22am AEDT

A new listicle



**Five trends that will define the world's forests in 2016**

January 19, 2016 6.23am AEDT

## Analysis and Comment



**The most shocking moments of the true crime documentary Making a Murderer depict two police officers gently coaxing a softly spoken teenager to recount his role in a vicious crime. Warning: spoilers ahead.**

### Where aid fails, appropriate technology can succeed

Peter Logan, *University of Technology Sydney*  
Much international aid fails to achieve its ends because the technology employed is not "appropriate" to its intended environment or culture. This needs to change.

### Australia has embraced the outsider CEO, but they can't always save the day

Mariano L.M. Heyden, *University of Newcastle* and Dimitrios Georgakakis, *University of St.Gallen*  
More large Australian companies are looking to outsiders to turn their fortunes around, but the evidence shows it can be a misguided strategy.

### Unemployed and at risk: more help needed for those out of work

Allison Milner, *Deakin University*  
The longer someone is unemployed, the worse their mental health gets and this can also hinder them from finding another job, research shows.

### Explainer: Surrealism

Natalya Lusty, *University of Sydney*  
As the longest-running avant-garde movement of the 20th century, Surrealism's scope and richness is perhaps unparalleled in its influence of modern art and culture.

### Making a Murderer: why innocent people confess under interrogation

Diane Sivasubramaniam, *Swinburne University of Technology*  
Innocent people do confess under interrogation to crimes they did not commit, even providing details about the crime. What leads them to falsely confess to very serious crimes?

### Recurrent thrush: how some women live with constant genital itching

Cathy Watson, *University of Melbourne*  
While most women will have one or more episodes of uncomplicated and temporary thrush, some suffer from recurrent episodes. These can be shameful and often

## Research and News

### Questions hang over conduct of another Turnbull minister

Michelle Grattan, *University of Canberra*  
Malcolm Turnbull has sought advice on whether Human Services Minister Stuart Robert breached the code of ministerial standards during a private trip to China in 2014.

### Philip Ruddock will quit parliament at the election

Michelle Grattan, *University of Canberra*  
when employed

- Australians are spending more on mental health services and employers need to take notice

More

## Back to School



Nutritional lunches can be achieved with simple core foods such as bread, fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat, fish or egg. from [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

### Forget quinoa and kale, these basic foods for your kids' lunch box will give them the nutrition they need

Evelyn Volders, *Monash University* and Zoe Davidson, *Monash University*

Basic foods can fulfil a child's nutritional needs at school and keep them energetic and alert.

- Shy teenagers find it easier to be included by classmates when starting secondary school
- Australian students are becoming increasingly disengaged at school - here's why

More

## Bushfires



## Columnists

### The ministerial future of Stuart Robert looks precarious, on the evidence from China

Michelle Grattan



### ASIC is going to need extra muscle when it takes on ANZ; APRA and RBA need to join in

Pat McConnell



David Glance — "Social media has lost its youthful promise and is looking old, tired and cynical"

## Pitch an idea

Got a news tip or article idea for The Conversation?

Tell us

## Our Audience

The Conversation has a monthly audience of 2.9 million users, and reach of 29 million through Creative Commons republication.

## Want to Write?

Write an article and join a growing community of more than 30,500 academics and researchers from 1,519 institutions.

Register now

## Make a Donation

The Conversation relies on sector, government and reader support. If you would like to help us have even better conversations, then you may like to make a one-off or on-going donation.

Donate

## Want to Write?

Write an article and join a growing community of more than 30,500 academics and researchers from 1,519 institutions.

Register now

*theconversation.com / become-an-author*

# Your pitch *must* stand out

The Conversation Australia has just **18 section editors**, who receive **hundreds of pitches daily**. Your pitch must be good; we can't publish everything.

|       |   |        |
|-------|---|--------|
| Inbox | New Pitch - The article will criticise the law's permissive approach to the challenging... - The article will criticise the | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - How international factors not Islam could de-democratise Muslim states with... - How international fact         | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - Extending the driving time of individuals living with a dementia - driving. New research demonstrates tl        | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - The implications of income tax in China This article would loc        | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - The implications of income tax in China - - The implications of income tax in China - This article would        | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - A provocative story to demonstrate the complexity of reproducing whiteness ... - A provocative story tc         | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - the suggested introduction of a national civic service program for young pe... - the suggested introduct        | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - The role of education in strengthening young people's understandings of cit... - why any new program            | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | Re: New Pitch - The environmental and land rights legacy of Phillip Toyne - Subject: New Pitch - The environment            | 15 Jun |
| Inbox | New Pitch - the order by a South African court to bar Sudanese president from leaving t... - the order by a South A         | 15 Jun |

# So are you ready to answer these questions?

## Pitch an article idea

The pitch: What's your story?

Story \*

In one sentence, what's your story? (50 word limit)

- What's your story in one sentence?
- Why is this interesting or significant for non-academic readers?
- Do you have any photos, video, audio, graphs or other material to illustrate your story? *(That can make a huge difference.)*
- Is this issue particularly relevant now, or looking ahead? Or are you suggesting this as a timeless 'explainer' of a commonly misunderstood issue?

# Refining your idea

- Read before you write.
- Have you done a quick keyword search?
- Is this your area of expertise?
- Pay attention to the news. What are people talking about?
- Work with your university communications staff to get your pitch right. Talk to someone else outside your field of expertise.
- **“So what?”**
- Most Conversation articles are only **600-800 words**, so start with a clear idea of the most important point you want to cover and make it easier for an editor to say YES.
- Your article doesn't have to say everything on this topic. It can't. Stick to one or two key points and support them.

## Writing tips

- Work hard on the first paragraph to grab the reader's interest. Start with a short, sharp statement of the article's essential facts, in no more than two sentences. Start with what's new, relevant, or surprising. Readers want to know Five Ws: who, what, where, when, why, and sometimes how.
- Make a brief sketch of your main points and stick to them. Put the most important information first. (Hardly anyone reads to the end).
- Write how people talk. **A man should never “disembark from a vehicle” when he can “get out of a car”**. Explain complex ideas. Don't get too technical. Avoid jargon.
- Our readability rating is based on Flesch-Kincaid readability tests, set at the level of **an educated 16-year-old**.
- Link to sources.
- **Photos, videos, audio, tables and graphs** can bring a story to life – so if you have any of those, mention that in your pitch and in discussions with your editor.

Instead of this:

“

I plan to write an article that ultimately questions the concept of socialism as a historical ideology, its buzz-word-status in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the new emerging values, built on pragmatic social-democracy that have possibly overtaken Socialism. I will then explain my conclusion as to why Socialism is well and truly out of context in modern Australian politics and my proposition of a ‘new way forward’, which calls for the reasonable regulation of capitalism, champions the right to cultural, racial and religious freedom and calls for a modernisation of democratic politics, which combines the engagement of industrial relations, paired with ethical business leadership in economic and social reform.

Aim for something like this

“

April 30 marks the end of WA's controversial baited drumline program for mitigating shark hazard.

We have undertaken a survey of over 550 ocean-users and find that ocean-users encounter sharks regularly, and oppose mitigation strategies that involve killing.

On April 30 our short paper detailing results will be published online in the journal 'Australian Geographer'. As such, a piece for The Conversation published on April 30 or May 1 would be very timely. We have a draft ready to go!

I'm an academic or researcher with relevant expertise and want to write the article.

## What do editors look for in a new pitch?

A real pitch:

### ***How poor representations of women on screen begin in screenplays***

*\* How female characters are described in screenplays is rudimentary compared to how male characters are described, so representations of women are poor before they even make it to the screen.*

*\* Demonstrate with examples from award nominated screenplays of feature films and television shows, e.g. *We st Wing*, *Le gend**

*\* Explain how character descriptions in screenplays impact casting, acting, camera work, etc.*

*\* Connect to recently popular twitter feed that highlights how female characters are described in screenplays: @FemScriptIntros, that has been covered widely in media on pop culture (e.g. Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/feb/11/blonde-fit-smokin-hot-hollywood-producer-shares-sexist-scripts-on-twitter>)*

### **What did this academic author do well to get a Yes so quickly?**

*“Radha’s pitch was **clear and concise**, and linked to a **recent news event**. It was really easy for me to tell what the article would be about, the argument Radha wanted to make and **how it linked to her expertise**. Once the article came in, it matched the structure laid out in the pitch and – most importantly – had a couple of **excellent, punchy examples** to illustrate her point.”*

### **Madeleine de Gabriele**

The Conversation's then Arts+Culture deputy editor

# Sexist screen representations of women start in the script

February 23, 2016 6.03am AEDT

Script writers need to think past adjectives for "sexy" when creating female characters. David Noah, CC BY-SA

Email

Twitter

Facebook

LinkedIn

Print

64

358

The issue of poor female representation in movies has been examined from [many angles](#), from the lack of women in positions in power to investors wary of female-led films. But do the problems start before the cameras begin to roll?

How female characters are described in screenplays is rudimentary compared with how male characters are described. In other words, representations of women are poor before they even make it to the screen.

This issue recently came to the fore with the Twitter feed [@FemScriptIntros](#), where American film producer Ross Putman tweets the first description of female characters in unproduced scripts he reads, anonymised with the character name JANE.

It [received a bunch of media attention](#) last week. This Twitter feed effectively demonstrates a pattern:



**Ross Putman**  
@femscriptintros



A gorgeous woman, JANE, 23, is a little tipsy, dancing naked on her big bed, as adorable as she is sexy. \*BONUS PTS FOR BEING THE 1ST LINE

## Author



**Radha O'Meara**

Lecturer in Screenwriting, University of Melbourne

## Disclosure statement

Radha O'Meara does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

## Partners



University of Melbourne provides funding as a founding partner of The Conversation AU.

# Academic benefits & strategic promotion



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

“UQ’s authors have been **republished in major media outlets worldwide**; they’ve attracted **new academic & industry collaborations**; and they’ve seen **higher citations of their research**. The Conversation is a fabulous way for us to create change globally.”

– The University of Queensland’s Corporate Relations Manager, Carolyn Varley, December 2015



“We now focus our media strategy on **the top dozen or so quality outlets that can influence the reputation of our university**. Radio National is one – and The Conversation is another.”

– Griffith University Director of the Office of Marketing & Communications, Dean Gould, September 2015



## **DO:**

- **Make it sound new, fresh, a new take.**
- **Do a keyword search before you pitch.**
- **Read and consume the media.**
- **Drive the debate forward**
- **Know how to explain your idea to a child**
- **Get to know friendly journos**
- **Leave your mobile on**
- **Act fast**
- **Pitch before you write**

## **DON'T:**

- **Argue against yourself, downplay your expertise**
- **Say you already tried another outlet first.**
- **Say it was already published elsewhere**
- **Pitch when it is too late**
- **Mass email journalists**
- **File 3000 words when we agreed on 800**
- **Pitch an idea we have all heard before**
- **Go MIA after filing.**



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<https://theconversation.com/au/pitches>