FACULTY OF ARTS

Adelaide Summer Research Scholarship 2019-2020

Counter-Terrorism Cyber Security Collaboration in the Anglosphere

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School of Social Sciences

Religious and right-wing terrorism remain active and growing threats to Australia's social and economic security, and especially so in the digital era. In cyberspace, violent extremist organisations can coordinate financial and ideological strategies for recruitment, proselytising and to also mobilise acts of violence. This is facilitated by a growing commercial availability of high-grade encrypted communication software, which stymies the efforts of security agencies to intercept or suppress violent extremism.

In response, the Australian government has, since 2017, enhanced its security partnerships with Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States (the 'Anglosphere'). Together, these states have initiated a cross-governmental cyber security strategy in which they coordinate laws and policies to co-opt commercial providers of encryption technology – including Twitter, Facebook and Google – to create digital 'backdoors' into their communication technologies that allows security agencies access to encrypted communications. This coordination between Anglosphere states is not well-known, nor is there systematic comparison of their respective implementation of this shared strategy. Yet these have significant implications for privacy and commercial data security.

This summer scholar project undertakes policy analysis of these anti-terrorism encryption policies of the Anglosphere countries since 2017. The policies are expressed in legislation, memoranda, and public announcements, and require careful synthesis: so the project will acquire, collate, analyse and compare the ways in which each state institutes anti-terrorism encryption policies' provisions. The project situates this analysis within the broader Anglosphere security collaboration – i.e. the '5 Eyes' partnership - and reflects on the impact on commercial data security and privacy rights. The project is suitable for a motivated and well-organised student skilled in basic research methods (additional training will be provided by Dr Legrand). The project will lead to: (i) the basis of a journal article; (ii) background information for an ARC Linkage; (iii) Op-Ed publication with the Conversation.

  The student will gain the following skills and experience;

• Publication in a high quality journal

• Co-publication with Project Supervisor

• Collating background information for a competitive grant application

• Comparative research skills

• Intermediate discourse analysis skills

• Security studies policy analysis