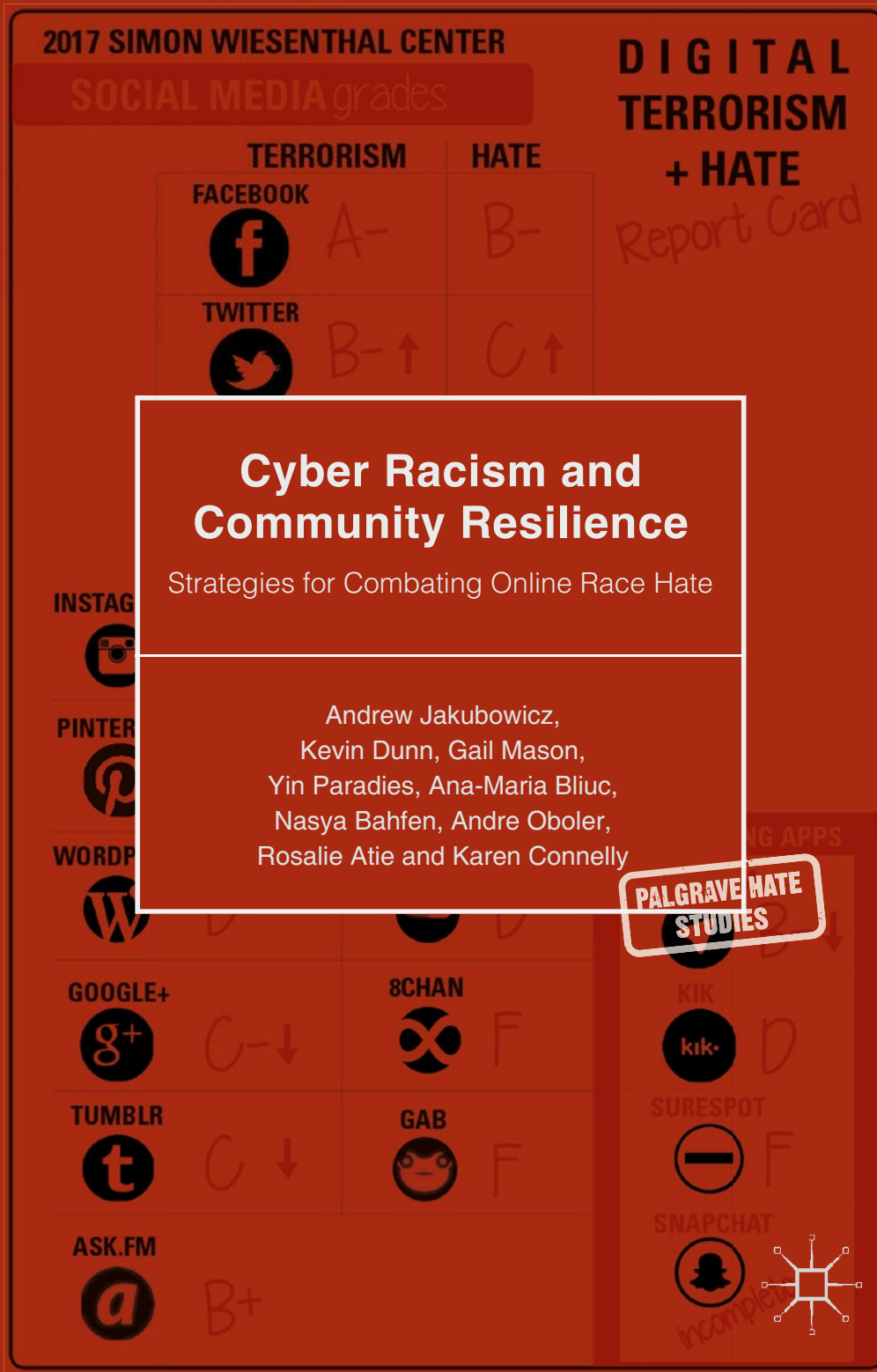
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Cyber Racism and Community Resilience
Strategies for Combating Online Race Hate
Andrew Jakubowicz,
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Preface

Background

Cyber racism, the spread of race hate speech through the Internet using the World Wide Web, has moved into centre stage in public debates across the world (Daniels 2010). Once considered a minor, if unfortunate, consequence of the freedom built into the Web, public concern has grown as those freedoms have magnified the impact of hate (The Guardian 2017). Targets include refugees and ethnic minorities in Europe, Muslim Blacks and Jews in the United States, Indigenous Australians and refugees and a multitude of ethnic and sub-national groups across Africa and Asia. Critical changes in both technology and politics have driven the growth of hate speech, as the multiplication of opportunities in social media has been incorporated into the growth of religious, ethnic and racial radicalisms. The Web enables the almost instantaneous creation of networks of association, while the isolation and potential anonymity of perpetrators protect them from accountability (Jakubowicz 2012). By early 2017, over 3.5 billion people, half the world's population, were connected to the Internet, a network that barely existed in 1997.

In the early 1990s, a team of researchers at the University of Technology Sydney undertook a study of Racism Ethnicity and the Media (Jakubowicz et al. 1994). The research took place just before the advent of the Internet and well before the appearance of the World Wide Web. At the conclu-

sion of the study, the authors commented, "While the fact that the media are part of the power structure of Australian society may help explain the pattern of media representation, it does not excuse it…" (p. 192). That book argued that industry self-regulation would ensure the protection of corporate self-interest, that little of substance would change, while the politics of post-colonial nations would contribute to how the media interpreted and responded to growing cultural diversity and political inequalities.

This book takes the story on a generation, into the heart of Web 2.0 and into the shadow of the Internet of Things, where social media have transformed the nature of communication, even though the power of race to determine life chances and opportunity appears hardly to have changed. A generation ago, overt racism in the media was still apparent, though the Australian media often denied serious racism existed in Australia and urged governments not to succumb to claims by the Human Rights Commission in its Inquiry into Racist Violence (Moss and Castan 1991) that racism was widespread or structural. (Jakubowicz et al. 1994).

The project from which this book is drawn grew out of a sense of frustration among the project initiators that the spread of racism in the real world, fuelled by the spread of hate online, seemed to be resistant to traditional forms of social policy. Andrew Jakubowicz (sociologist), Gail Mason (criminologist) and Kevin Dunn (social geographer) had all been invited speakers at a 2010 Forum organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on race hate speech online.

The Commission had held a previous forum in 2002, though its recommendations at that time that the government action to sign up to a European hate crime protocol were essentially ignored. Unlike many countries in Europe, Australia did not have national legislation on racial vilification at all until 1996, despite having signed the International Convention on the Eradication of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1966. Australia had acceded to the Convention in 1975, with the passing of the Racial Discrimination Act, but its reservation to the key Article 4 on vilification (similarly to the USA) meant that it had little in the way of rights-based legislation to direct against the spread of racism online. The trigger for the 2002 forum was the Australian government's consideration, as part of its accession to the European Convention on Cyber

Crime, to also take on the additional protocol on Cyber Racism. It had been a decade since the Human Rights Commission had proposed that Australia move ahead on legislation to combat racial vilification (Moss and Castan 1991). The Forum supported Australia signing on to the additional protocol, a position strongly opposed by industry representatives. Ultimately, despite the consensus among human rights groups of support, the industry (well before Facebook, Google or YouTube) successfully lobbied the government, and the additional protocol was dropped.

The 2010 event, occurring as social media appeared on the scene, was triggered by a request from the then new attorney general that the Commission investigate what might be done to deal with community complaints about antisemitic outbursts online posted by students at an exclusive Sydney private school, and the rise in hate speech directed against Muslims who as a members of a religious faith were not covered by Australian racial vilification laws. The second forum also produced a stalemate of an outcome—the Commission was reluctant to suggest legislative changes, the Internet industry was reluctant to accept any further regulation or responsibility, the media regulator was reluctant to extend its brief to detailed coverage of social media and the law enforcement authorities complained that there were no laws that might allow them to proactively intervene.

The three researchers then collaborated to initiate a research project that could explore the problem further. The scope would identify the extent and impact of hate speech associated with race and religion. Further, the project would explore with partners what sorts of strategies might prove to be effective in building resilience among targeted communities, support among bystander communities and innovative cooperation between civil society, government and industry.

The initial group was extended to include Yin Paradies (race relations researcher), a long-term research collaborator with Kevin Dunn, and then recruited two early career researchers, Ana-Maria Bliuc (social psychologist) and Nasya Bahfen (media studies), while Rosalie Atie joined from the Challenging Racism project. Coincidentally, the team thus comprised members with Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim, Indonesian/Arab and Eastern European backgrounds, as well as Anglo-Australian.

Half were male, and half were female. Institutional partners included the Victorian Community Health (VicHealth) foundation, the AHRC Discrimination commissioner and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA). We joined with the Online Hate Prevention Institute, whose CEO Andre Oboler, with a background in both information technology and law, became part of our writing team. Finally, we recruited a doctoral student, anthropologist Karen Connelly. We were successful in securing an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (LP120200115) (2012–2016) with the three community/industry research partners, the AHRC, VicHealth and the FECCA.

Our methodology needed to tie the empirical research into the extent and nature of the experiences of online racism, together with an exploration of how the phenomenon might be addressed through strategies ranging from legislative interventions to online engagement to wider social action. In the Australian context, it was quite fortuitous that our project began at a time when pressure was mounting from the conservative side of Australian politics for the withdrawal of the critical section on racial vilification from the Australian Racial Discrimination Act (Part IIA—especially Section 18c). This meant that there was ongoing and robust public debate about what might be encompassed by the idea of racial vilification, and what would be the range of legitimate responses. Major inquiries in 2014 and 2016 were launched by the government, to both of which our group made research-based submissions. In the second and public inquiry (the first was never released), our research was directly quoted in key deliberative sections of the Parliamentary committee report (Parliament of Australia 2017).

The public discussion of how to respond to race hate speech (both online and offline) provided invaluable insights into an evolving discourse around race and freedom of speech, particularly as the environment increasingly focused on threats to the social order occasioned by the spread of terrorism. One of our case studies, the online criticisms by Andrew Bolt, a conservative media commentator, of an Indigenous footballer, Adam Goodes, gave us two aspects of the complex situation. The Federal Court in 2011 found Bolt to have breached RDA Section 18c without an acceptable defence, and he was thus an "objectively"

identifiable practitioner of race hate speech. His critique of Goodes in 2014 generated a rich, if poisoned, reservoir of commentary from his readers, generally abusing the prominent Indigenous celebrity (Australian of the Year 2014). Moreover, Bolt became a *cause célèbre* for the conservative cause, not only because he was employed by *News Limited*, which was closely associated through its newspapers with the conservative political interest, but also because many of the conservative and what became the alt-right pressure groups adopted his situation as a signal martyrdom for their cause (Gelber and McNamara 2013).

While the research was undertaken in a politically heightened context, at the same time we faced many of the same ethical issues that have been identified by other researchers in the field. People who pursue racist agendas often use the responses of their targets and the wider society as a means to propagate their views. They count on commentary in the media and the reactions of the community, governments and judicial bodies to amplify their messages. We may inadvertently alert propagators of racism to how they might become more effective. Our work will bring information about race hate propagandists and their "homes" to people who may not have previously been aware of them. It will add, if only a tiny amount, to the notoriety they crave. However, we believe it is crucial to lay out the narratives and arguments of racists, as they cannot be addressed nor "called out" if the wider society knows nothing of their existence. Moreover, a systematic codification of what should count as unacceptable race hate speech on the Internet contributes significantly to the recognition of racism for those who encounter it unawares. Our research shows how the capacity to recognise and identify racism online correlates highly with resistance to race hate speech online, while also being associated with anti-racist values in the offline world.

Our view could best be summed up in these words: active intervention that helps people recognise racism, call it out, fend off its hurt and join together with others to move forward, should be the focus for public policy. An aware, resourced and empathetic public sphere backed by effective legal resorts can play a major role in building resilient communities, undermining the corrosive effects of online racism, while sustaining democratic and liberal values.

Outline of the Book

Chapter 1 lays out the political economy of the Internet in the age of social media, proposing that the combination of technology and economy provides a powerful driver towards unimpeded opportunities to express and circulate racist ideas. Moreover, while regulation of the technology recognises the problems of hate speech, the barriers to effective intervention remain high. Regulation of content faces even greater challenges from a world divided over what should be controlled. The chapter then introduces some of the conflicting ideas about race and racism, including the impact of racism on those who are its targets and victims. The chapter concludes by canvassing the multiple meanings of "resilience," pointing to some of the implications of the concept as a realised program for social well-being.

Chapter 2 lays out an argument for the value of interdisciplinarity in research. Drawing on a range of social science and humanities disciplines, the review of approaches points to how this book utilised the diversity of perspectives in the research team.

Chapter 3 reports on the online survey that collected data from over 2000 Australian regular Internet users. We asked them about their encounters with racism, what they thought racism meant and what action they would like to see emerge to limit the pervasiveness and impact of racism online. The survey over-sampled some groups known to be the targets of racism, to ensure a depth of experience could be tapped. Targets of, bystanders to and perpetrators of racism online were all examined to understand the differences between them and the issues that they prioritised.

Chapter 4 drills down into what attracts racists to the Internet, and the different ways in which racism is "performed" online. Three cases—associated with Jewish, Muslim and Indigenous communities—are explored, which serve to link psychological, sociological and political insights, and the implications for resilience down the track.

Chapter 5 then explores the experiences of targets of cyber racism, both in terms of institutional experiences and responses, and through the eyes of groups who rarely have their voices heard. Six groups and two community organisations provided detailed information—covering

Muslims, Jews, Africans, people from the Middle East, Chinese and Australian Indigenous online users. The targets share among themselves a sense of the growing impact of hate speech, both among their ethnicities of origin and through their responses. These responses have been characterised by withdrawal from arenas where bridging social capital might have blossomed, to locations where they focus on building intra-communal bonding social capital locked away from a wider and more threatening world. However, different communities experience the dangers and threats in very different ways and with highly varied impact.

Chapter 6 examines the discourses of racism, and how narratives are formulated to carry racist messages and sustain the dominance of some groups over others. Narratives about Australian nationalism provide a framework for the examination of specific discursive elements in racism online. These include discourses that seek to legitimise and delegitimise acceptable identities, the use of rhetoric and the forms of language that appear in racist discourse. Particular emphasis is placed on how communities are built in cyberspace, and how they are threatened by racist attacks—indeed how such attacks are used to attract and hold counter-communities.

Chapter 7 looks to how communities of resistance to racism might be built and their solidarity be achieved and sustained. A range of online communities are described, and then six Australian groups are analysed in terms of their capacity to counteract specific forms of racism online. Reflections on the more successful strategies provide elements for a model of resilience.

Chapter 8 focuses on the regulatory regimes that have been constructed at national and transnational levels, identifying the issues in different countries or groups of countries in relation to philosophies of law. Specific attention is paid to self-regulatory approaches by the Internet industry, criminal law and its limitations, and civil and administrative law remedies.

Chapter 9 reflects on what the findings of the empirical research mean for the current approaches to pushing back against race hate online. Drawing on actions in Europe, North America and Australia, the difficulties with current approaches are summarised and the outcomes of

current initiatives are crystallised. Drawing on our research we create an analytical matrix that can help shape specific strategies for the different fields we have discovered underpin the growth of Internet racism. Finally, the chapter offers a portfolio of approaches that together might build community resilience in a way that ensures the collaboration of civil society, the Internet industries and the government at the local, national and transnational levels.

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Sydney and Melbourne, August 2017
The CRaCR research group

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1

Context: "Cyberspace," "Race" and Community Resilience

Word and Deed

The cyber world and the world of action are not distinct. On January 29, 2017, a Canadian student attacked a mosque in Quebec City, murdering six worshippers. Alexandre Bissonnette (Narayan 2017), reputedly a strong nationalist, joined Norwegian killer Anders Breivik (Jakubowicz 2011) as an outstanding global example of the murderous capacity of White power. Bissonnette had apparently been turned towards White power by the visit to Canada of Marine Le Pen, head of France's Front National, and Breivik had fondly quoted Australian anti-multiculturalists in his online manifesto. Each had long histories of participating in White power online communities. On the same day, the Australian media (Olding 2017) reported the case of a local "White supremacist" Michael Holt who had pleaded guilty to stockpiling weapons in preparation for a mass rampage in a local shopping mall. He was not known to have been directly connected with any White power group, but had been actively involved in online hate speech. He had also searched the Web, constantly in pursuit of information about what he should believe and how he should act. There is no doubt that the opportunities afforded by the online world have expanded the reach and impact of race hate across the planet.

A. Jakubowicz et al., *Cyber Racism and Community Resilience*, Palgrave Hate Studies,
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From the earliest appearance of the Internet as a publicly accessible network of communication, individuals and organisations with radical racist agendas have seen it as their natural hunting ground (Richardson 1998). American White power groups, Islamist crusaders, anti-Islamic crusaders, European neo-Nazis, alt-right anti-Semites, Australian ultra-nationalists and revanchist separatist groups using race or ethnicity as their imaginary nirvana have all discovered the almost endless possibilities of community, networking, secret communication and anonymous targeting of enemies. The Internet has too often attracted users who want to access it as a place to pursue the targets of their hate, described by one of our research subjects as people who want "to twist in the knife".

This book reports the results of a five-year study of the evolution of racism on the Internet, mainly in Australia, but always within the borderless reality of global cyberspace. It describes the way in which the Internet has afforded the opportunities for racism to grow, spurred on by the intimate relationship between technology, economy and power that underpins this transformation of global realities. It explores how cyber racism erodes trust and the underpinning of social cohesion in multicultural societies. It concludes that this erosion can only be met by strategies that build community resilience.

In the first chapter, we lay out the broad political economy of race and the Internet. We explore the structure of technology, economy and power that has come to be realised in the emergence of the transnational supercorporations within whose structures and through whose products and services racism occurs. We then drill down to the next level, where processes of regulation form, are resisted and transform. We look at how things have changed since the major studies undertaken in the first decade of the century have been overtaken by new technologies, new questions of regulation and new environments of racialised conflict and racial empowerment.

How the Internet Began to Grow Opportunities for Racism

As a networked transnational and in some ways post-national global society, cyberspace has shown the presence of racism as one of its most easily recognisable features. It is scarcely possible to enter any sector of the

contemporary social media world without tripping over an image, meme, video, Instagram post, Facebook page or Tweet that uses racialised difference to demean or intimidate somebody or some group. It may be done with humour, introducing a joking relationship of power between the perpetrator, the bystanders and the targets or victims. It may ooze unconsciously out of the preferences expressed and the messages left on dating sites. It may stridently announce itself in the self-aggrandising websites, blogs and Facebook pages of individuals whose pride in their communal heritage has transformed into the systematic abuse of people who differ from them. It may exude from thousands of trolling tweets on Twitter, where racist and sexist abuse have become some of the more problematic and unattended consequences of un-bordered communication. But wherever it flows, its intent is hurt, and its aspiration is humiliation.

Racism is a relationship between people who are defined in some sense by their genotypes, phenotypes or cultures—who their parents were, what they look like and how they live their lives (Lentin 2008). Racism is always a relationship of power, where either the practices of discrimination and oppression or the language of those relationships illuminates deeper histories and continually contested realities (Roseman 2014). Racism can be embedded in structures of societies (Williams 2009), in the benefits that flow and the disadvantages that inhibit. It can affect peoples' sense of agency, corrupting their awareness of common humanity and permitting deep and callous pain to be inflicted (Emirbayer and Desmond 2012). Racism erodes the perpetrator and corrodes the victim; it distorts economies and limits opportunities; it lessens social development and shortens lives. It can produce in all parties to the relationship an increasingly destructive process of aggression, leading, in some cases, to violence and murder.

Racism today cannot be understood without understanding the Internet; the Internet today cannot be understood without understanding racism (Daniels 2013). Over the past 15 years, a number of insightful studies have shown us how the development of the Internet has been so inflected by racism. In North America, the analysis of global White power and its local manifestations, or, perhaps better, the spread and infilling of White power into the interstices of the spreading Internet, has developed as a key point of intersection for committed scholars concerned about future tendencies in intergroup conflict.

The concept of "cyber racism" has its origins in research by Les Back in the UK early in the period of the Internet (Back 2002). Drawing on Walter Benjamin's analysis of Nazism as a philosophy of terror built on an aesthetic of communitarianism, Back explores how fascism developed its own popular culture that could carry, through emotion, large masses of people into the fold of regimented authoritarianism through a type of "moral indolence." "The celluloid enhancement of racial narcissism prompted a widespread indifference towards its victims," Back argues (Back 2002, p. 628), thereby embedding a normalised barbarism as part of the everyday. Moreover, the means of mechanical reproduction—photography, cinema and radio—were critical to the rise and spread of Nazism (Ware and Back 2002). Eighty years later, "the Net has provided a means for people to sense, listen, feel and be involved intimately in racist culture from a distance," both publicly through the Internet and privately in front of their own screens (Back 2002, p. 629). Back set out to develop an analysis that could "make critical theory speak to political realities and vice versa" (Back 2002, p. 631) in order to move beyond what he saw as sterile conversations about Internet censorship, and technologically unattached explorations of cultures of fascism.

He deployed "the notion of 'cyber racism'" to encompass a range of sub-cultural movements, which commonly contain rhetorics of racial, national or sectarian uniqueness and common destiny, leavened by ideas of racial supremacy and separation, fed by a repertoire of racial otherness and sustained usually by a utopian (or dystopian) worldview (Back 2002, p. 632). Back focused on documenting the emergent culture of White power, in particular its globalisation, through the sharing of discourses of whiteness. White was defined against the Jew, the Black and the mongrelised races, reinvigorating the once-thought dead stereotypes and imagery of Nazism's targets, and circulating them widely to new audiences and across national borders. Moreover, Back was able to show how, importantly, the Internet had provided culturally supportive spaces for racists, such that when one of Back's subjects abandoned White power, the activist was bereft. Intense, competitive but short-lived seemed to be the cultural attraction for some people of life in online White power communities.

Back also raised the role that the technology of the Internet played in squeezing time and space, and thereby intensifying schismatic tendencies within and between racist groups. Moreover, he was extremely prescient in his predictions, albeit he did not imagine the explosion generated by Web 2.0 and the growth of social media. "The real danger is perhaps that in the 'informational age' isolated acts of racist terrorism may become commonplace" (Back 2002, p. 642). Breivik, Bissonnette and Holt are just three of those who trod the road that Back fearfully foretold.

Drawing inspiration from Back, Jesse Daniels focused more centrally on the USA to explore how White supremacists used the Internet to attract young people, identifying the key dynamic in "the persuasive story telling of hate" (Daniels 2009). In doing so, she pointed to the links between masculinities and racism, and how the technologies of gender intertwined with those of race. In imaginative research, she sought to identify why young people were attracted to the ideologies of race, and how their own senses of self were drawn into the narratives they consumed and then reproduced. One of her more challenging insights identified their sense of empowerment, of increased agency, that becoming part of a racist community provided to its participants. As was clear in the cases of Bissonnette, Breivik and Holt, and indeed as has been shown with the radicalisation of young Muslims (Young et al. 2016), the online community can also provide a place for people, who are otherwise isolated in their lives, to create a sort of meaning and enter into relationships that bolster identity.

Cyber racism research thus has its roots in studies of the political culture of White power in the digital age. Don Black, the founder of Stormfront, a US-based, but now global, White power site (an Australian example of which we discuss in Chap. 6), proudly posted a cutting in the mid-2000s, dating back to 1998 at the birth of the Internet. Black, a former Ku Klux Klan grand dragon, had been interviewed by the Montgomery, Alabama, *Advertiser* (Richardson 1998) journalist Sandee Richardson for a story canvassing the growth of hate sites. Montgomery is also the home town of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a key organisation that has tracked race hate online since its first appearance. The article captures the moment well—Black, proudly proclaiming how the Internet would be the making of the global White power movement,

Joe Roy of SPLC decrying the expansion and David Goldman of SPLC Hatewatch foretelling that "We're seeing just the beginning phase of the potential for a racist coalition made possible by the Net."

Understanding the Multilayered Networking Processes That Enable the Internet

The history of the Internet has been well-rehearsed, beginning with technologies that allowed the digitisation of information in different localities to be connected through technologies of communication (Cohen-Almagor 2011). Commencing in the world of the military, where protected communication increasingly became the underpinning of modern warfare (Hafner and Lyon 1998; Kleinrock 2008), key scientific centres supported by government funds extended the links between them. Soon the networks designed to fortify the state entered into resource deals with commerce, while the innovation communities that were generated by these hubs spun off into new private corporations, now some of the largest in the world (Hanson 2015). At the heart of the Internet, a new military industrial complex with many players expands continually. Two broad systems emerged, one technological, the other economic, facilitated by governments, especially that of the USA, at the outset. Each system had its own ecological hierarchy, the imperatives of which both complemented and challenged each other.

In his "Internet-map," Ruslan Enikeev has described cyberspace as "a huge quantity of utterly unstructured information" (Enikeev 2011). However, once he colour-coded the 350,000 sites he selected and the 2 million interlinkages he collected and visualised as a universe, it became clear it is centred on Google and Facebook, which are surrounded by country networks—the USA the most dominant, under challenge from China, with Russia and Japan closely following behind. These central pivots—a search engine and a transit station—summarise the Internet in the period of the mature Web 2.0. Increasingly, they frame and delimit what can be "known" about Internet relationships.

The Internet continues to grow dramatically, with users increasing from just over one billion in 2005 to 3.5 billion in 2016, almost half the

population of the planet, (Statista 2017). Statista has shown the spread of the Internet, and the demographic reach—from Europe at 79% to Africa at 25% (Statista 2016)—which we would suggest reflects patterns of power reaching back hundreds of years into the spread of European imperialism. Regional penetration of the Internet has also intensified—by 2017, North America stood at 88%, Europe 84%, Oceania (dominated by Australia) 68%, Eastern Europe 67%, South Asia 33% and Africa 29%. That is, the access to information has become structured in ways and follows the patterns that reflect broader economic and political forces.

Access to and use of the Internet have not been evenly distributed—the developed Western world and particularly its younger populations are the ones most likely to have access to and make use of the Internet as the backbone to their economic and communal lives. Older people, with lower levels of literacy, from less economically developed societies are far less likely to use the Internet. This digital divide remains both a global and a societal phenomenon, though the expansion of the Internet has made this far less dramatic a phenomenon, especially in the West, than it was in the first Internet decade (Daniels 2013). For example, in the Australian context, this would be evident in the differences between the access and use among recent older African refugees and younger, tertiary educated Indian immigrants.

The political economy of the Internet requires us to determine how and where value is created. The Internet depends on and contributes to globalisation, which can be defined as the acceleration and expansion of the circulation of capital, culture and populations, as barriers that might otherwise inhibit them are reduced (Fuchs 2009). However, this circulation does not occur randomly or in an unstructured way, but rather through attractors that seek on the one hand to speed up the circulation of economic capital, and on the other selectively extract from populations the value that they produce. Culture carries much of the potential to create value, which is born both in the transfer of technologies as finished goods, and in the cultural capital embedded in people. Various structures of regulation exist to manage this system, or at least keep it somewhat monitored. Meanwhile, national governments or their corporate proxies and partners use similar processes to continually