

The ACMA gets serious about social media

External communications at the ACMA will be given a facelift following the recent appointment of former Sydney Morning Herald Executive Editor Tom Burton.

In a newly created role, Mr Burton has been hired as an executive manager to drive the Gov2.0 strategy, making the ACMA the first government agency to engage social media and networking tools to better communicate with Australians.

‘For some time I have been conscious of the importance of using the many new applications to improve the ACMA’s stakeholder engagement and external communications, both domestically and internationally,’ said Chris Chapman, Chairman of the ACMA.

Gov2.0 is the use of new media applications such as Facebook, wikis, blogs, social media apps like YouTube and Flickr, and instant messaging tools including Twitter, to give users more open access to government information and processes.

Mr Burton recently returned from Washington DC where he spent several years implementing Web2.0 and Gov2.0 practices as Communications and Online Director for The Center for American Progress (CAP). CAP is a progressive think tank run by President Obama’s transition chief, John Podesta.

‘I am delighted we seized the moment and engaged Tom, given the imminence of his return,’ said Mr Chapman. ‘Tom is extremely well credentialed for the role—not only has he been very effective in his most recent job but among other roles he has been the Executive Editor of the SMH and smh.com.au, Canberra Bureau Chief for the AFR and a ministerial adviser to the then Minister for Communications, Michael Duffy.’

‘During the process of the restructure and recruitment of permanent general managers for all our divisions, I distilled the need for a senior manager to lead our engagement with both new and old tools in an innovative and targeted fashion,’ said Mr Chapman.

‘Tom will bring his considerable insight and experience to bear with energy, creativity and commitment to assist the ACMA in using Web and Gov2.0 tools, in concert with traditional channels of communication, to engage effectively with our wide and ever-increasing range of stakeholders.’

Mr Burton believes now is the time for the government to employ Web2.0 strategies and tools.

‘Rapid changes in media and communications markets are fundamentally changing communication and media industry and consumer behaviour. New web tools are now available to engage and dialogue with a broad range of users and stakeholders. These give users quick and easy access to government and in turn help inform and drive better decision-making for the government and its agencies,’ said Mr Burton.

‘I was particularly impressed by the recent report of the Government 2.0 Taskforce. It provides a comprehensive blueprint for the implementation of Gov2.0 principles and practices. The report has been internationally recognised for its holistic and considered approach to the use of new media tools to genuinely engage with users.’

Cybersmart, the ACMA’s national cybersafety education program for children and young people, will be the first to employ the ACMA’s social media strategies to better communicate with key audiences including children, young people, parents, carers and educators. The ACMA’s Cybersafety Programs and Outreach sections will trial the following activities in early 2010:

- > A channel on the video sharing website, YouTube. A site popular with children and young people, it provides an appropriate way to share video content with this audience.
- > Blogs and forums on the Cybersmart website. These tools provide valuable communication opportunities to effectively reach parents and other associated adult audiences.

‘I look forward to helping lift the ACMA’s communications and media engagement, but also building a strategy to open up as many channels to the ACMA for genuine dialogue,’ said Mr Burton. ☺



Tom Burton, the ACMA’s recently appointed Executive Manager, Gov2.0