

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The new national cultural policy needs to adapt its infrastructure to reach and engage more audiences in an accessible and fun format. I believe it should include building a national social library app and website that capitalizes on social interactions through library material (books, audiobooks, movies etc) reviews. Reading Australian literature is on the decline in the digital age when Gen Z is attracted to social media connections and access to international cultural products on their phones. Nationalizing the Australian library app could allow Australian library card holders to rate and review books they have borrowed. This could allow the Australian government valuable data on what Australian media Australians are consuming and what they like most about it. The Australian library can mitigate cost, access and motivational barriers to reading for Australian authors by capitalizing on new audience consumer behaviours of enabling social connection through reviews and comments on library books. Currently, Goodreads owned by Amazon is collecting millions of readers data and analytics of who is reading what and why. Readers are drawn to the platform to share their views, emotions and connect with other about the books they are reading. Amazon uses this data to identify demographics about their users, sell their data and market to them. The Australian government and literature industry is missing out on accessing this data and building a platform that connects Australian audiences to Australian cultural products. Librarian recommendations are being substituted for book influencers on social media like Goodreads. Let's bring them together: librarians, book influencers and Australian readers, through the national library social app that allows readers to connect over Australian cultural products. If the library controls the algorithm of book recommendations, reviews and access through libraries, they can increase awareness and access to Australian cultural products like books. This would benefit the cultural industry through library royalties being paid to Australian authors, increase awareness and discussion about Australian books through a recommendation system that prioritizes Australian works based on users reading tastes, and allow the library and other government entities valuable reading data from Australians. Imagine going to borrow a book on the library app and being able to see that your local librarian rated it 5 stars, the prime minister rated it 4, your friend said it was their fav book ever and your grandma hated it! Imagine how many more Australian books could be seen, prioritised and cherished in a recommendation algorithm controlled by Australian libraries! No longer will Australian authors and publishers have to rely on cutting through the billions of other cultural products available on international social media platforms to reach Australians. We can bypass big corporations like Meta and Amazon dilution of Australian books and gatekeeping of Australian readers data. We can capitalize on current readers habits of social connection through online discussion platforms whilst mitigating barriers to reading such as difficulty evaluating a good book, cost, time and difficulty finding Australian books (Reading Australia, 2021). This idea was developed in my QUT Communications Capstone Project Proposal for Writing Australia. Please contact me for more info, research and sources. Thanks, Mabel