



# Online news comments through multiple lenses

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## Abstract

I outline a multifaceted approach to online news comments, those posted in response to a news article. Together with students and collaborators, I have explored online news comments from multiple perspectives. Our interest was initially sparked by the common assumption—while lacking empirical backup—that online comments are like face-to-face conversation. We tested that assumption, by bringing a register lens and multidimensional analysis, and found that online comments are neither conversation nor informal chat, but rather their own register, featuring some of the lexicogrammatical characteristics of essays and opinionated discourse. At the same time, we have studied these comments through the lens of the Appraisal framework, showing that they are predominantly negative and contain more Judgement and Appreciation than Affect. Finally, we have explored online news comments from a computational perspective, building machine learning models to automatically detect comments that are constructive and/or toxic. This multifaceted approach provides multiple avenues through which to explore many forms of digital discourse.

## When

Friday, 17 March  
4:00-5:30 pm AEDT

## Where

Quad Seminar Rm S204  
(Oriental Room),  
The University of Sydney  
Zoom ([link](#))

## More information

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This event in the Sydney SFL research seminar series is presented by the Sydney Corpus Lab.

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