12 deadly Indigenous Australian social media users to follow

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Social media has revolutionised how we communicate. In this series, we look at how it has changed the media, politics, health, education and the law.

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From a battle over an oil pipeline in the American mid-west to small Australian communities fighting for survival, Indigenous people are harnessing social media to take their stories global. Joe Brusky/Flickr, CC BY-NC

Social media has revolutionised how we communicate. In this series, we look at how it has changed the media, politics, health, education and the law.
In many countries around the world, Indigenous people make up only small percentages of the population. But at a time when “news no longer breaks, it tweets” – with information travelling faster than the mainstream media can keep up – social media has become an increasingly powerful way to make our voices heard.

I’m currently in the United States, working on a special issue of the Australasian Journal of Information Systems on Indigenous people and social media activism. While here, I’ve been able to closely follow one of the largest Native American protests in modern US history.

Social media has helped the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe attract national and global support in their fight to protect sacred sites and water supplies from a 1,900 kilometre pipeline, expected to carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day just north of their reservation. (Follow the latest #NoDAPL developments on Twitter, YouTube, Medium, Instagram or see the Aboriginal flag flying at the Sacred Stone Camp via its Facebook page.)

Social media is also crucial to #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA – a campaign against the closure of remote Aboriginal communities that took off after a single Facebook post from the Bieundurry family, residents of the remote Aboriginal community Wangkatjungka.

Within a week of that first Facebook post, thousands of people across Australia were in the streets. Then came international media coverage to the issue, as well as support from Indigenous groups overseas.

I’ve written about the #SOSBLAKAUSTRALIA campaign as an example of the nexus between political activism and Indigenous people’s use of social media in Australia for a chapter of a new book, Negotiating Digital Citizenship: Control, Contest and Culture.
There are some challenges. While social media can provide significant benefits to Indigenous people, we have yet to fully understand the health impacts of constantly being connected and subject to violent and oppressive content. This is something my current research is focused on.

Indigenous Australians have always been early adopters of technology, and information and communication technologies are no exception. I’d expect that to continue as new media platforms continue to emerge. As Jason Glanville notes:

> what the longest continuous unbroken thread of human history points to is an extraordinary level of capacity and resilience, innovation and adaptability
There are too many strong Indigenous people on social media to list here. But if you want to tap into the latest in Indigenous Australian news, politics, research, culture and more, these deadly dozen will steer you towards more accounts to following.

**Dameyon Bonson**

About the Black Rainbow Living Well Foundation.

Dameyon Bonson is the 2016 Dr. Yunupingu award for Human Rights recipient and founder of Black Rainbow, Australia’s peak suicide prevention group for Indigenous lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. He’s also the managing director of Indigenist and an advocate of Indigenous genius, Indigeneity and wellbeing.

Follow Dameyon on Twitter and LinkedIn, or Black Rainbow on Twitter and Facebook.

**Leesa Watego**

Leesa Watego talking about Taking Ownership and Building Platforms.

Leesa Watego started Deadly Bloggers in 2009, a directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers posting on everything from business to pop culture. She is the director of Iscariot Media, a niche media enterprise focusing on creative, online and educational projects. Leesa is an outstanding educator and deep thinker.

Follow Leesa on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and more, or Deadly Bloggers on Twitter or Facebook.

**Joe Williams**

*The Enemy Within*

from Mayfly Media

A short film about champion boxer and former rugby league player Joe Williams’ fight with depression.

Joe Williams works hard to inspire youth and individuals through motivational speaking workshops.
run through his charity The Enemy Within. He is impassioned by the high rates of suicides in Indigenous communities – speaking and writing powerfully about his own experience of surviving a suicide attempt – as well as the continued discrimination Indigenous people face in mainstream media.

Follow Joe on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook.

Amy McQuire

Amy McQuire leading a video panel on police brutality featuring Leon Petrou’s case.

Amy McQuire is a journalist with 98.9FM in Brisbane, the first Indigenous radio station in a capital city. Amy has a history of being vocal about the injustices faced by Indigenous people, including talking about hard issues like Indigenous deaths in custody and police brutality.

Follow Amy on Twitter, LinkedIn or Medium and 98.9FM on Twitter, Flickr and Facebook.

Jack Latimore

Jack Latimore hosting a 2015 panel on New Media and Indigenous Reporting

Jack Latimore is a researcher and journalist with The Guardian Australia, writing on Indigenous affairs, politics, culture, tech, media and journalism. He is involved in the development of several projects aimed at improving the quality of Indigenous representation and participation in the mainstream media.

Follow Jack on Twitter, Medium or Facebook.

Euginia Flynn
Eugenia Flynn is a blogger who writes from her viewpoint as an Aboriginal, Chinese, Muslim woman living on Kulin Country in Melbourne. Eugenia is a thoughtful, poised and strong Indigenous woman.

Follow Eugenia on Twitter and Facebook.

Bronwyn Fredericks

We have some wonderful academics researching issues that are important to Indigenous Australia. Often referred to as “Blakademics”, many of them are enthusiastic social media users – such as Professor Bronwyn Fredericks, one of Australia’s few Indigenous Pro Vice-Chancellors.

Bronwyn promotes issues of health and wellbeing, race/racism, regional development and more. She is also a fantastic supporter of Indigenous students.

Follow Bronwyn on Twitter or LinkedIn.
Torres Strait Islander woman Kea Lewry graduated today from #CQUni #Cairns with a Bachelor of Environmental Science! Congratulations Kea!

Bronwyn Fredericks
@BronFredericks
Torres Strait Islander woman Kea Lewry graduated today from #CQUni #Cairns with a Bachelor of Environmental Science!
Congratulations Kea! 🌸
5:18 PM - 28 Sep 2016
26 66

Summer May Finlay

Summer May Finlay is a public health professional, PhD candidate and an avid social media user. She is passionate about Australian politics, Aboriginal issues, health, music, art, films and blogs on a variety of other topics.

Follow Summer on Twitter or LinkedIn.

Lynore Geia

Lynore Geia speaking about Close the Gap 2016.

Dr Lynore Geia is an impressive advocate for Indigenous Health. She is the founder of Indigenous Health May Day – or #IHMayDay – Tweetfests, which have been successful in gaining national
Celeste Liddle

Celeste Liddle is the National Indigenous Organiser of the National Tertiary Education Union, freelance opinion writer and social commentator. She blogs at Rantings of an Aboriginal Feminist. Celeste is a strong voice on social media and an advocate for Indigenous-controlled media, as well as the value of having more Indigenous commentary in the mainstream media. As Celeste recently wrote:

Social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter... allowed us to connect and organise over vast distances. They also gave us platforms to discuss matters which had long been denied within the mainstream press.

Follow Celeste on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

Sandy O'Sullivan

Dr Sandy O'Sullivan is one of our wonderful academic bloggers. She is a great example of the way Indigenous people are making global connections. She is currently in the United States promoting Batchelor Institute's Centre for Collaborative First Nations Research.
The Institute of Global Indigeneity
Is Proud to Host: Crossing Borders: International Teaching and Research Collaborations on Indigenous Issues
November 8, 2016: Standish Room, 9:00am to 12:00pm

Collaboration Across Borders
Dr Sandy O'Sullivan, Director, Centre for Collaborative First Nations' Research, Butchelor Institute. Sandy is a proud member of the Wiradjuri Nation. She has a number of accolades including Enduring Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow and Australian Research Council Fellow. Her research focus includes First People's Museum Studies, Creative Arts, Interactive Media, Curatorship and Higher Education.

International Research Collaboratives and STEM
Professor Peter Radoll, Dean, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Strategy, University of Canberra. He is a descendant of the Anawatin people of NSW Australia. He has been a member of the Canberra Institute of Technology Council, an Indigenous community representative on the ACT Community Information Technology Advisory Group and is committed to increasing Indigenous participation in STEM.

Internationalizing Indigenous Studies
Professor Harvey Charles, Dean and Vice Provost for International Education and Global Strategies, UAlbany, SUNY. He has a long career in international education and has published widely on issues including global learning, internationalizing the curriculum and comprehensive internationalization. Harvey serves on a number of Boards, frequently consults and gives addresses on international education issues in the US and around the world.

Follow Sandy on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook or the Centre for Collaborative First
Luke Pearson and IndigenousX

I hereby claim Twitter on behalf of @IndigenousX... all your tweets are belong to us.
3:46 PM - 7 Jan 2016
226 414

Pearson In The Wind
@LukeLPearson

Follow

No list of Indigenous Australian excellence on social media would be complete without Luke Pearson – founder of the highly influential Indigenous media organisation IndigenousX. Luke is also currently a senior digital producer for NITV.

@IndigenousX started in 2012 as a rotating Twitter account, hosted by a different Indigenous Australian every week, and has since expanded into other social media. Luke has a great sense of irony, which is often evident in his tweets (like the one above).

Follow Luke on Twitter or LinkedIn and IndigenousX on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

That’s just a snapshot of how Indigenous Australians are using social media to connect, debate and advocate to make a difference, as are so many other Indigenous people internationally. As Luke Pearson has said:
digital technologies, and in particular social media, can be a significant tool for connection, empowerment, education, employment, the ongoing struggle for social justice, and Reconciliation. In fact, whatever issue is being addressed (or is not, as the case may be), I believe the digital world can assist.