



THE DIGITAL REPUTATION REPORT

**ASX200 CEO
LINKEDIN
ANALYSIS**

**2022
REPORT**





**YOU CAN'T FOLLOW SOMEONE
YOU DON'T TRUST;**

**YOU CAN'T TRUST SOMEONE
YOU DON'T KNOW.**

- Craig Mullaney
Partner | Brunswick Group



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THE SILENT MAJORITY.

NOT LONG AGO, THE CEO OF ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST ORGANISATIONS REMAINED SILENT WHILE THE DIGITAL MASSES CONDUCTED A SWIFT AND FAR-REACHING CHARACTER ASSASSINATION THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY DO IMMENSE REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND CORPORATELY.

Was the attack warranted? In my opinion, no. Were the allegations accurate? History would suggest not.

So, why would this CEO - any CEO - stay silent, leaving others to 'fill the void' and take control of their corporate future?

This is the question that remains unanswered if you analyse the digital footprints of those leading our 200 largest listed organisations. In Propel's most recent study - **The Digital Reputation Report** - almost 85% of ASX200 chief executives are either 'invisible', 'inactive' or 'ineffective' on LinkedIn. 85%.

"The silent majority" is the best way to describe them.

After three years of incredible instability and fear, the time for leaders to lead is now. As one LinkedIn user said, praising a post by former Telstra CEO Andy Penn:

"I understand the anxiety of high profile Australian business leaders to make public statements ... but this is absolutely NOT the time to be shy. The community and your shareholders want to hear from you."

What's holding our leaders back? There is an almost universal need to attract, reconnect, and reassure across Australia right now.

And the most powerful way for leaders to talk directly to key audiences in their own words is: social media.

Staff, candidates, partners, customers, investors, media - all want to hear from leaders. Edelman, Brunswick and other global studies tell us so.

Social media is a unique and immense opportunity for leaders to get personal and purposeful, to build intimacy at scale, and to show what they stand for - far beyond the bottom line.

But, make no mistake - leaders' social media actions today have a direct impact on where people invest tomorrow (their hard-earned cash and their careers).

Given the evidence, I'm surprised the majority remain silent.

Legacy attitudes around social media need to shift: avoiding social media today creates more risk - your best chance to de-risk in a world where stakeholders expect leaders to turn up online is to participate.

This report serves as an unofficial 'call to arms' to every communications advisor - you are the trusted counsel others will come to for guidance in this space. If the data shows that participation is more powerful than avoidance, what is your plan for leaders?

Please read the findings and case studies with urgency, and make sure you move quickly to amplify good leadership in the one place people are watching: social media.

Why miss your best opportunity to attract, connect and inspire key audiences at scale in today's market?



Roger Christie

Founder + MD, Propel



**THE FIRST QUESTION WE NEED
TO BE ASKING IS: SHOULD
BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE A
PRESENCE?**

**IF THE ANSWER TO THAT
QUESTION IS 'YES', THEN IT
MUST HAVE A LARGE DIGITAL
COMPONENT, BECAUSE THAT'S
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY.**

- Oliver Freedman
Senior Vice President, APAC | RepTrak



THIS IS ABOUT SHARES, NOT SHARES.

THIS IS THE REALITY FACING LEADERS TODAY.

- **Four out of every five investors now use digital** channels every day to inform their investment decisions. (Brunswick)
- Furthermore, **80% of people expect CEOs will be personally visible** when discussing policies and actions. (Edelman)
- They don't want regurgitated corporate messages, either: **82% expect leaders to use social media** to communicate mission, vision, values. (Brunswick)

Leaders must navigate the fine line between authenticity and 'woke-ness' in the very public domain of social media: their ESG and talent attraction credentials depend on it.

But this is not a time for silence.

According to RepTrak, companies with outspoken CEOs across ESG issues enjoy higher than average reputation scores - and there is a strong positive relationship between these scores and business outcomes (e.g. purchase intent, talent attraction, trust and advocacy).

This is about shares (monetary), not shares (vanity).

This is about the battle for trust and reputation - assets every leader craves today.

Far from being the realm of selfies and self-interest, social media has well and truly grown up, and now informs where people invest their time and money.

Leaders must respond. Because, whether they're active online or not, every leader now has a digital reputation.

One that staff, talent, peers, media, shareholders, partners and investors are using to make decisions about them.

Risk is avoidance, not participation.

As we enter 2023, online anonymity is not an effective strategy for survival. Now is the time to stand up and speak up online.

63%

63% of global consumers prefer to buy from companies that "stand for a purpose that reflects their values and beliefs" and will avoid those that do not. (RepTrak)

60%

60% of people expect a CEO to speak publicly about controversial social and political issues they care about, when considering a job. (Edelman)

82%

82% of employees will research a CEO's presence online when considering whether to join a company. (Brunswick)

4X

People prefer to work for leaders who use social media 4x more than leaders who do not. (Brunswick)

THE HYPOTHESIS. THE METHOD.

ANONYMITY' IS THE PREFERRED STRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL ONLINE, WITH THE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIA'S ASX200 CEOs OPTING TO STAY OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT ON LINKEDIN.

This was the hypothesis we set out to test after observing the behaviours and activity levels of Australian CEOs since the start of the COVID pandemic. Propel analysed publicly available LinkedIn data on the activities of ASX200 CEOs (correct as of 18 November 2022) between 1 January and 18 November 2022.

Based on the data set, levels of activity were defined as follows.

- **Very active:** year to date (YTD) average of 3+ own posts per month
- **Moderately active:** YTD average of 1+ own posts per month
- **Rarely active:** YTD average of less than 1+ own post per month
- **Dormant:** no own posts or engagement activity YTD

We acknowledge that LinkedIn is only one of many communication options available to CEOs today. We acknowledge there are also varying strategic approaches to protecting and enhancing digital reputation as per Propel's 'Five Drivers of Digital Reputation' (see below) which are shaped by an individual's context and preferences.

We therefore cannot comment on strategy and do not purport to reveal any industry knowledge in this report.

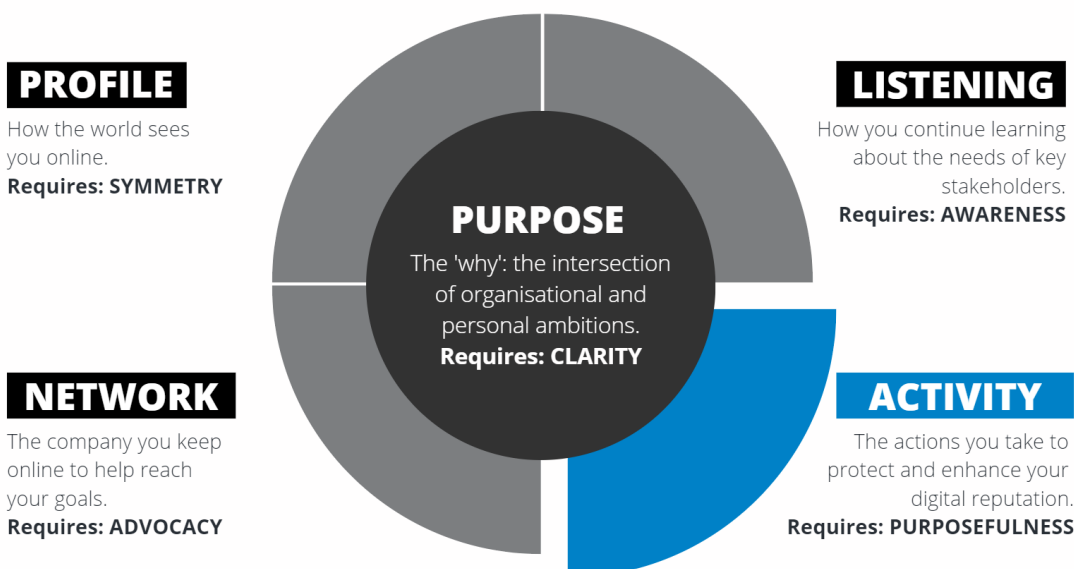
The following analysis is objective, based on a consistent set of LinkedIn metrics for each CEO focused on 'Activity' (see below). All data is publicly available and accessible online.

Our standard of LinkedIn success.

We define successful leadership on LinkedIn at a baseline as:

'Consistently publishing content and participating in conversations which generates high levels of engagement, indicating alignment with stakeholders' needs.'

So, who is getting this right?





**LEADERS HAVE TO DO THIS.
THIS IS REALLY BECOMING A
KEY PART OF THEIR TOOLKIT.**

**I THINK IT WILL BECOME
INCREASINGLY UNACCEPTABLE
FOR PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS TO SAY: 'I DON'T DO
THAT KIND OF THING.'**

**IT'S A BIT LIKE SAYING: 'I DON'T
USE A PEN.'**

- Martin Stewart-Weeks
Founder | Public Purpose



ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: THE KEY NUMBERS.

88%

of ASX200 CEOs have a LinkedIn profile.

72%

of CEOs with a profile are either dormant or rarely active.

6%

of CEOs with a profile are considered very active.

8

The average number of posts for CEOs with a profile is eight per year.

60

The ten most active CEOs average 60 posts per year, totaling 42% of all posts.

52%

of CEOs with a profile posted only once or not at all in the analysis period.

5.5k

The average number of LinkedIn followers for CEOs is 5,555.

53%

The ten most followed CEOs (5% of all CEOs) attract more than half of all followers (53%).

~1m

ASX200 CEOs are followed by almost 1 million LinkedIn users in total (949,990).

For the purpose of this research report, the following terms are defined as:

- 'Post': content published on LinkedIn by the CEO or a re-post shared with accompanying additional commentary by the CEO.
- 'Engagement': a reaction (e.g. like), comment and/or re-post on a piece of LinkedIn content.
- 'Followers': the number of people who follow a person on LinkedIn; not the number of individual connections.
- Analysis period: 1 January - 18 November 2022.



ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: AVERAGE VS. ACTIVE.

WHAT DOES 'AVERAGE' LOOK LIKE? WHAT DOES 'ACTIVE' LOOK LIKE?

Every leader has a different strategy behind their use of LinkedIn and other social media platforms. Yet it is still helpful to see what 'average' looks like on the surface when benchmarking CEOs across basic metrics.

What does an 'average' ASX200 CEO look like on LinkedIn (*note: 'average' includes those without a LinkedIn profile*)?

No CEO controls their digital reputation, but being active on platforms like LinkedIn provides leaders with their best chance to influence what others see. Their key stakeholders are watching.

What does an 'active' ASX200 CEO look like on LinkedIn (*note: 'active' includes all CEOs deemed 'moderately' and 'very' active*)?



MALE

An average ASX200 CEO is nearly 11x more likely to be male than female (10.8x).

~5,000 FOLLOWERS

An average ASX200 CEO has nearly 5,000 LinkedIn followers (4,726).

7 POSTS PER YEAR

An average ASX200 CEO posts slightly more than seven times per year.

RARELY ACTIVE

An average ASX200 CEO is more likely to be 'rarely active' than 'dormant' (4x more likely), 'invisible' (4.5x), or 'moderately active' (6x).



MALE

An active ASX200 CEO is over 5x more likely to be male than female (5.2x).

~11,000 FOLLOWERS

An active ASX200 CEO has 10,813 LinkedIn followers - more than 2x the average.

35 POSTS PER YEAR

An active ASX200 CEO posts more than 5x more than the average.

15,000+ ENG'MENTS

The 12 'very active' CEOs attract an average of 15,093 engagements (reactions, comments + re-posts) on their content per year.

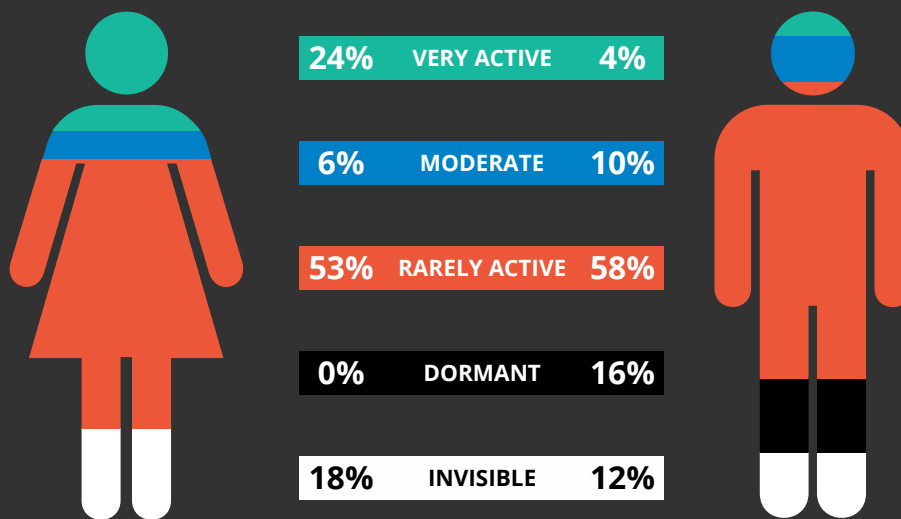
ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: A GENDER LENS.

DESPITE ONLY MAKING UP 9% OF ASX200 CEOs, FEMALE LEADERS PUNCH WELL ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT ON LINKEDIN PERFORMANCE.

Analysing the results through a 'gender lens' reveals an interesting narrative for female CEOs. They currently make up **9%** (17) of ASX200 CEOs, and **82%** have a LinkedIn profile (vs. 88% for male CEOs). As the below chart shows, **30%** are considered 'moderately' or 'very active', and every single female CEO with a LinkedIn profile is active in some way - **none are dormant**. They are also **6x** more likely to be 'very active' on LinkedIn, compared with their male counterparts.

There are a few key data points that show the imbalance in audience sizes (e.g. following) female and male CEOs generate, particularly when most active or most followed.

- Overall, female CEOs have a slightly higher average number of followers at **5,401 followers** (vs. 5,399 for male CEOs).
- However, 'very active' female CEOs average just **8,671** followers, while 'very active' male counterparts average **19,450** followers - **more than 2x as many followers**.
- Furthermore, the combined LinkedIn following for the two most followed male CEOs (~**320,000**) is more than **10x** that of the two most followed female CEOs (~**31,500**).



Despite the extra following male CEOs attract, it does appear female CEOs are, on average, **more engaged and engaging** on LinkedIn.

3.5x

Female CEOs with a LinkedIn profile average almost 2 posts per month (1.99 per month, or ~24 posts per year) - over **3.5x more than male CEOs** (who average 6.79 posts per year).

80%

'Very active' female CEOs average a total of **19,671** engagements on their posts YTD - **80%** more than 'very active' male CEOs (who average 10,917 engagements over the same period).

4x

Despite having fewer than half the average number of followers, 'very active' female CEOs generate **4x more** engagement than 'very active' male CEOs.

ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: TO POST OR PARTICIPATE?

WHILE CEOs TAKE COMFORT IN KNOWING HOW OFTEN TO POST, PARTICIPATION IS THE BETTER INDICATOR OF SUCCESS.

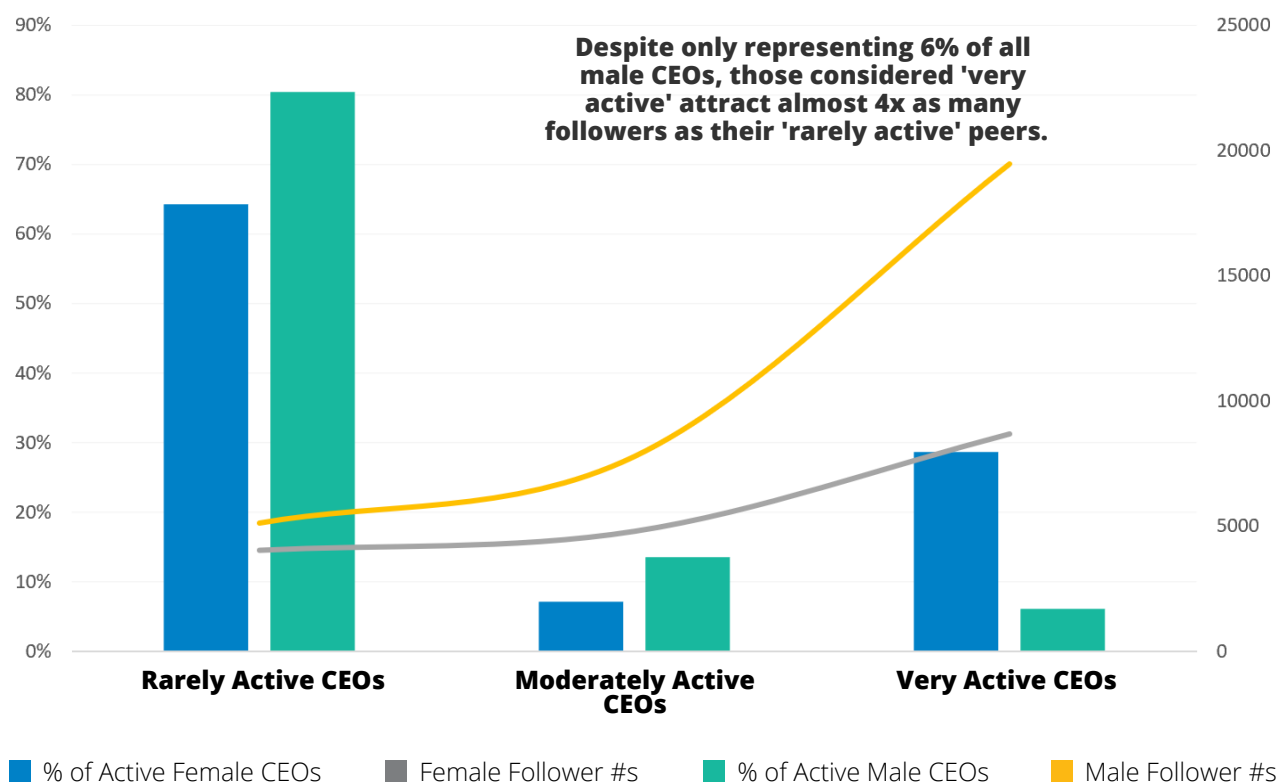
By analysing the post frequency of ASX200 CEOs, we observe a disproportionate volume of posts coming from the most active leaders. During the analysis period, the **ten most active CEOs** generated almost **550 posts** between them (549) - that's **5%** of CEOs contributing over **42%** of all posts.

In fact, **nearly 70%** of all ASX200 CEOs with a LinkedIn profile **posted five times or less** in the analysis period (69.89%), with **more than 50% posting just once or not at all** (52.27%). Comparing male and female CEOs, **45%** of male CEOs with a LinkedIn profile **did not post** during the analysis period, whereas only **14%** of female CEOs did not post.

However, deeper analysis shows **no correlation** between a CEO's post frequency and their ability to generate a LinkedIn following, with mixed results across the board (see over).

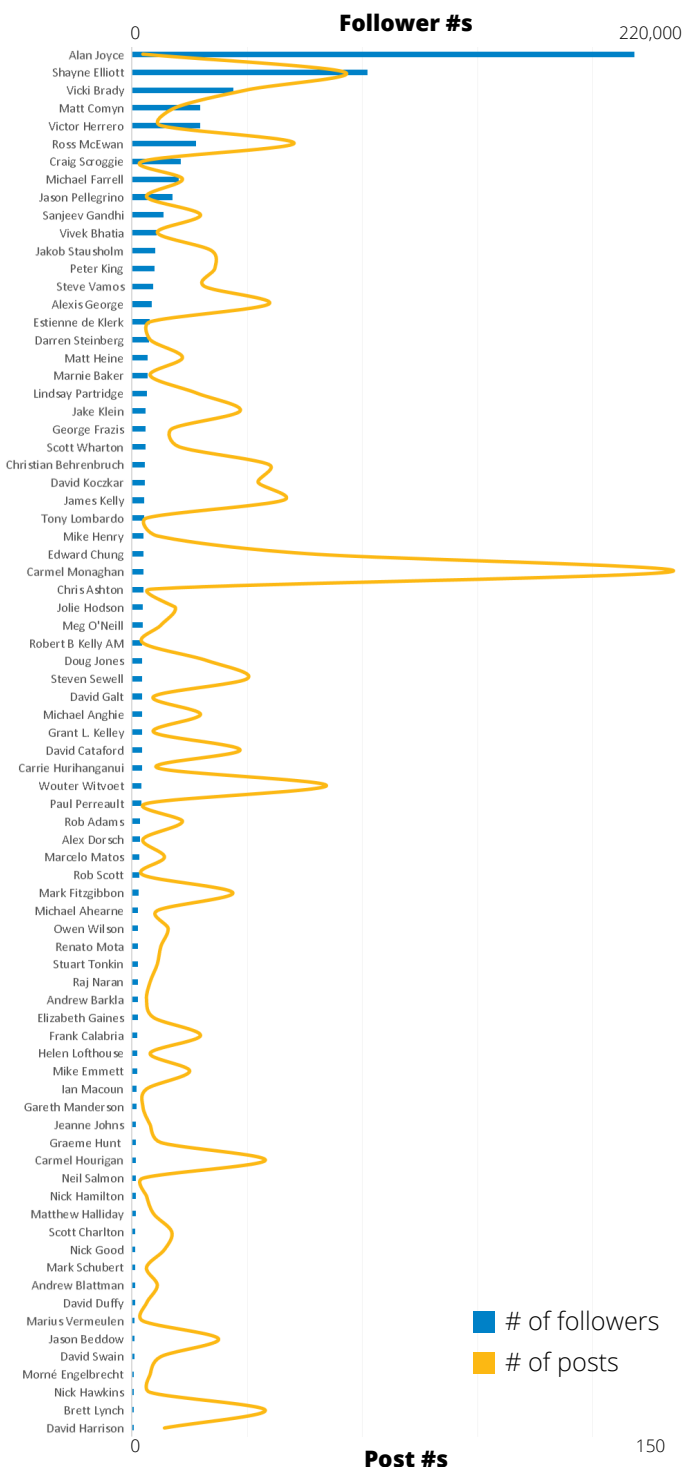
Conversely, there is an interesting correlation between a CEO's activity levels and their ability to attract followers (see below). When CEOs are somewhat active on LinkedIn, they are more likely to enjoy the benefits of an increased audience following and engagement by increasing how often they participate vs. post. This is particularly true for male CEOs.

The **6% of male CEOs considered 'very active'** average nearly 20,000 followers - an **almost 4x increase** (3.8x) compared with those who are 'rarely active' and a **2.5x increase** on those who are 'moderately active' (vs. 2.2x and 1.8x respectively for female CEOs).



ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: TO COLLECT OR CONNECT?

POST FREQUENCY DOES NOT HELP BUILD A FOLLOWING. BUT - FOR CEOs WILLING TO PARTICIPATE - KEY MOMENTS OF CHANGE ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT AND INFLUENCE ONLINE AUDIENCES.



The chart on the left highlights the relationship between post frequency and follower numbers for all ASX200 CEOs who posted at least three times in the analysis period. It shows there is no correlation between a CEO's post frequency and their ability to generate a LinkedIn following.

In the case of Qantas CEO Alan Joyce, while he has **more than 2x** the following of any other ASX200 CEO - and **44x the average** - he only posted three times in the analysis period.

Conversely, Ramsay Health Care CEO Carmel Monaghan posted at least **2.5x more** than any other ASX200 CEO - and **21x the average** - yet she has just slightly more followers than the average CEO.

Market context reveals a more interesting insight - and opportunity - for leaders. While CEOs might prefer to avoid the limelight on LinkedIn, key moments of change (e.g. macroeconomic pressures, issues and crises, leadership changes) are **an opportunity to strengthen stakeholder connections**.

Carmel Monaghan has been particularly active in **recognising the efforts and stories of her people** - a workforce likely weary in the face of a three-year pandemic. Banking CEOs Shayne Elliott (ANZ Bank - p19) and Ross McEwan (NAB) have both, likewise, made a more conscious effort to **acknowledge staff, partners and customers** seeking online connection in a physically disconnected world.

More recently, Medibank CEO David Koczkar has **remained visible** - and received praise - during the company's **cyberattack** (see p20).











And after succeeding Andy Penn, Telstra CEO Vicki Brady seized the opportunity to be more visible with audiences online - and reaped the rewards (p18). Her **32 posts** during the analysis period generated **2x more engagement** per post than any other CEO - even **7x** that of her 'very active' CEO peers.

ASX200 CEO STATISTICS: THE TOP TEN LISTS.

OF FOLLOWERS

While a CEO's follower numbers should never be measured or valued in isolation, a larger following presents greater potential to reach and influence key stakeholders.











Which ASX200 CEOs have the highest number of LinkedIn followers?

- 1  **Alan Joyce**
Qantas
- 2  **Shayne Elliott**
ANZ Bank
- 3  **Matt Comyn**
CBA
- 4  **Victor Herrero**
Lovisa Holdings
- 5  **Ross McEwan**
NAB
- 6  **Craig Scroggie**
NEXTDC
- 7  **Michael Farrell**
ResMed
- 8  **Vicki Brady**
Telstra
- 9  **Jason Pellegrino**
Domain Holdings
Australia
- 10  **Sanjeev Gandhi**
Orica

OF ENGAGEMENTS (YTD)

Audience engagement can be a helpful metric to show the affinity and connection a CEO has with their LinkedIn audiences, as a stepping stone to trust and reputation.

Which ASX200 CEOs have the highest number of audience engagements (YTD)?

- 1  **Vicki Brady**
Telstra
- 2  **Shayne Elliott**
ANZ Bank
- 3  **Ross McEwan**
NAB
- 4  **Carmel Monaghan**
Ramsay Health
Care
- 5  **Jakob Stausholm**
Rio Tinto
- 6  **Alexis George**
AMP
- 7  **Matt Comyn**
CBA
- 8  **Steve Vamos**
Xero
- 9  **Peter King**
Westpac
- 10  **David Koczkar**
Medibank

Data and rankings correct as of 18 November 2022.



THE REAL RISK LEADERS AND ORGANISATIONS FACE NOW IS INERTIA.

WHEN THE ENVIRONMENT IS DIFFICULT AND PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, THEY SAY NOTHING. AND THAT LEAVES A VACUUM.

THE BIGGEST RISK IS TO NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE STRATEGY.

- Vanessa Liell
Partner | Orizontas



THE KEY FINDINGS.

THE REAL OPPORTUNITIES.

WHILE THESE NUMBERS PROVIDE HELPFUL BENCHMARKS FOR CEOs, THE KEY FINDINGS GO A STEP FURTHER AND INFORM WHERE LEADERS SHOULD FOCUS NEXT, DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THOSE SETTING THE STANDARD ON LINKEDIN.

While the majority are still largely dormant, there is plenty to learn from the active minority. And plenty of opportunity to elevate the voices of leaders across corporate Australia.

1

ZERO OR HERO: WHICH IS THE REAL RISK?

There is a notable gap between those CEOs who appear to be 'nowhere' and those who appear to be 'everywhere' online. While boards might prefer a leader who avoids the limelight to a 'digital hero', both come with risk. So, what's the best approach for companies today?

2

HUMAN STORIES BEAT THE CORPORATE SCRIPT.

While there is comfort for leaders in 'sticking to the script' and using social media as an extension of other communication channels, the research shows the power of authentic storytelling in a leader's own voice. Every post is an opportunity to form a deep, direct connection with audiences.

3

NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' FOR SOCIAL MEDIA.

Much like the value of finding their own voice online, leaders must also find - and feel comfortable in - their own approach online. The most effective leaders are those who avoid copying other leaders, and instead aim to extend and amplify their offline leadership style online.

4

TRUE LEADERSHIP IS VISIBLE IN TOUGH TIMES.

Social media audiences are savvy to 'woke-ing class' CEOs, looking to win the popularity vote online. But trust and credibility are not built on bandwagons. Real leadership emerges - and is publicly celebrated - when leaders remain authentic, visible and active during tough times.

5

SAFETY IN NUMBERS VS. GOING IT ALONE.

Whether responding to reputational threats or promoting major corporate initiatives (e.g. leadership transition), CEOs only stand to benefit from tapping into colleagues and industry peers. A 'digital coalition' acts as rocket fuel for positive messages and a shield for reputation in the face of the digital masses.

KEY FINDINGS.

1

ZERO OR HERO: WHICH IS THE REAL RISK?

THERE IS A NOTABLE GAP BETWEEN THOSE CEOs WHO APPEAR TO BE 'NOWHERE' AND THOSE WHO APPEAR TO BE 'EVERYWHERE' ONLINE. WHILE BOARDS MIGHT PREFER A LEADER WHO AVOIDS THE LIMELIGHT TO A 'DIGITAL HERO', BOTH COME WITH RISK. SO, WHAT'S THE BEST APPROACH FOR COMPANIES TODAY?

In 2017, the very public downfall and dismissal of former CPA head Alex Malley sparked a conversation across Australian boardrooms. Much was said about the risk of having a 'digital hero' as a CEO - someone who became 'bigger than the brand' and someone who, when it came time to leave, would take their digital assets with them.

Five years on, our data suggests the legacy of this fallout lives on, and continues to influence attitudes around whether leaders should or should not have an online presence. 'Better to be silent than sorry,' may be a fair description.

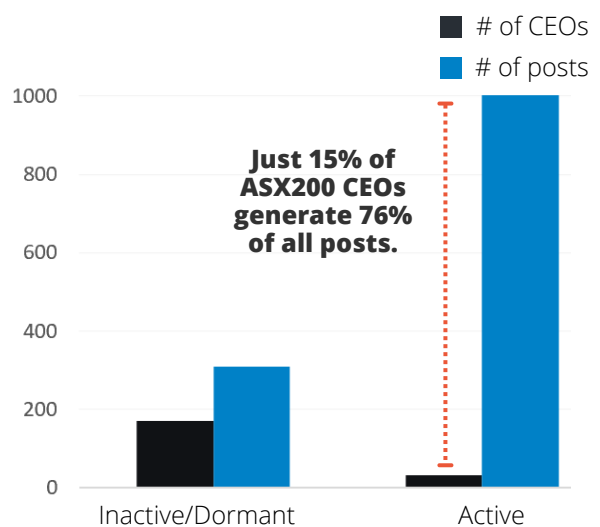
But there is plenty of middle ground - and plenty of value to be gained - when leaders turn up online with a clear purpose. Not for ego or glory, but to provide accessible, scalable updates to stakeholders who are increasingly active - and influenced - online.

The real risk is ignoring social media as a strategic communication channel. No one wants a CEO who is the focus of every post and effort online, but it is harder (and more expensive) to engage key audiences like staff and candidates when the CEO is invisible and that work is left to the brand.

Furthermore, staff themselves worry speaking up online will create issues when they don't see their CEO or other executives leading by example. CEOs like Edward Chung (Technology One), Ross McEwan (NAB) and Alexis George (AMP) are active and effective.



OBSERVATION: Alex Malley was criticised for using corporate social media profiles to grow his personal influence and interests. (Image via Australian Financial Review)



ACTION: Almost 85% of ASX200 CEOs could greatly increase their brand visibility and connection with key audiences by posting more than once per month on LinkedIn, and by publicly recognising staff and partners in comments.

KEY FINDINGS.

2

HUMAN STORIES BEAT THE CORPORATE SCRIPT.

WHILE THERE IS COMFORT IN 'STICKING TO THE SCRIPT' AND USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN EXTENSION OF OTHER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, DATA SHOWS THE POWER OF AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING IN A LEADER'S OWN VOICE.

EVERY POST IS A CHANCE TO FORM A DEEP, DIRECT CONNECTION WITH AUDIENCES.

When we think of our our lives and preferences, there's no doubt we prefer to connect more with humans than brands. And CEOs just happen to attract more interest than most.

So, why do leaders muzzle their advantage by replacing their own authentic, human stories with sanitised or scripted ones?

Vicki Brady (Telstra) started as CEO during the analysis period, succeeding Andy Penn - an active and effective CEO in his own right. Interestingly, Vicki had posted 13 times on LinkedIn prior to becoming CEO - none of these posts reflected her personal story.

The post on the right is her very first post as CEO. Not a corporate message including details more commonly linked with an investor statement. Instead, she chose a post that talked to her origins and how they shape her priorities as a CEO.

Her first 13 posts averaged ~1,000 reactions. The post on the right generated ~7,000 reactions and ~400 comments.

Stakeholders want to learn about the human behind the leader.

Social media just happens to be the best opportunity for leaders to control that narrative and present the best version of their authentic selves.

ACTION: Every leader has a reason why they lead today, and a clear purpose that drives them. Communications advisors should work with leaders to define what matters most to them and how to tell those stories online.



Vicki Brady • Following
Chief Executive Officer at Telstra
2mo •

Growing up in Holbrook in country NSW, my father inspired me to pursue a career in business and my grandmother encouraged me to venture out of my comfort zone and go after my dreams.

Now, that girl from the bush is CEO of Australia's largest telco, and I couldn't be happier or prouder to lead a team with such a special spirit that delivers so much to Australians and increasingly globally. I'm particularly proud to show my two teenage girls (and every girl!) the power of setting your mind to something and going after your dreams.

We've got a lot of work to do: building on the good work we've already done to deliver T25, and really making sure that Telstra is a great place for our customers. I couldn't think of a better way to start this day than at [#telstravantage](#) where we are bringing together our Enterprise customers and our technology partners to explore new ways to innovate and grow in the new world.

As my predecessor [Andrew Penn](#) recently said: our best days are ahead of us.



KEY FINDINGS.

3

NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' FOR SOCIAL MEDIA.

MUCH LIKE THE VALUE OF FINDING THEIR OWN VOICE ONLINE, LEADERS MUST ALSO FIND - AND FEEL COMFORTABLE IN - THEIR OWN APPROACH ONLINE.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEADERS ARE THOSE WHO AVOID COPYING OTHER LEADERS, AND INSTEAD AIM TO EXTEND AND AMPLIFY THEIR OFFLINE LEADERSHIP STYLE ONLINE.

A common criticism levelled at social media users is their tendency to 'overshare' intimate or trivial details of their life. In fact, seeing the way others misuse social media is one of the main reasons leaders avoid using it themselves.

But analysis of the most active ASX200 CEOs shows the diversity of voices and approaches that can be taken. There is no 'one size fits all'.

For example, Shayne Elliott (ANZ) is quite active among his peers today, but his 'servant leadership' style does not match the 'soapbox' stereotype many associate with social media.

His approach is more about participation and recognising others, which he explains in an interview with Facebook where he queries why more leaders aren't active on social media:

"How can you not? It is the way people live today. To me it would be equally ludicrous for me to say I don't have a mobile phone.

"I just see it as a tool of life and if you're not participating in that, how can you possibly understand your customer base?"

Leaders who go into social media with a plan to mirror their peers risk losing relevance. Leaders who see social media as an extension of themselves, and make an effort to understand how key audiences expect them to turn up online, are the ones who thrive.



Shayne Elliott • Following
Chief Executive Officer at ANZ
2mo •

It's been great seeing more of our people returning to the office over the past couple of weeks. And what's even better is having our youngest ANZ family members in the office for our school holiday program this week. We love supporting our working parents manage the school holidays with a program that educates our future generation about the diverse culture and history of our First Nations people and also teaches them about the importance of sustainability. Thanks for the chat !

[#sustainability](#) [#banking](#) [#inclusion](#)



and 1,254 others

35 comments · 9 reposts

ACTION: Leaders can greatly improve performance - and reduce risk - when they simply focus on being themselves online. Communications advisors should work with leaders to clarify their style, and how they want to appear online.

KEY FINDINGS.

4

TRUE LEADERSHIP IS VISIBLE IN TOUGH TIMES.

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCES ARE SAVVY TO 'WOKE-ING CLASS' CEOs, LOOKING TO WIN THE POPULARITY VOTE ONLINE. BUT TRUST AND CREDIBILITY ARE NOT BUILT ON BANDWAGONS.

REAL LEADERSHIP EMERGES - AND IS PUBLICLY CELEBRATED - WHEN LEADERS REMAIN AUTHENTIC, VISIBLE AND ACTIVE DURING TOUGH TIMES.

Online audiences are immediately sceptical of CEOs who use their social media profiles solely as a mechanism to broadcast positive or popular messages. It's a dangerous path to walk if CEOs 'chime in' on social issues without a history of engagement and commitment to the cause. Digital footprints are deep, permanent, and easy to reference.

Without consistency through all seasons, leaders risk eroding trust and credibility online. Social media should never be viewed as a 'fairweather channel' for CEOs - it is, in fact, a domain where reputations are made or reinforced in times of considerable trial.

Everyone across Australia is aware of the recent spate of cyberattacks to major corporations, and the exposure of sensitive customer data.

Health insurer Medibank was one of those targeted, but rather than going silent during an extremely challenging period for the business and customers, CEO David Koczkar has remained visible. He and his communications team have used LinkedIn to update stakeholders, even responding to public comments and misinformation (see right).

As one comment says, "*I appreciate the open and transparent communication.*" When your stakeholders need to hear from you, direct access to them via social media is an invaluable risk management tool.

OBSERVATION: There is a tendency for leaders to deprioritise social media communications during issues and crises, as some still view it as a 'less official' channel. But, underpinned by established networks and advocacy - and with the ability to control and amplify any messages sent - leaders and comms advisors would be wise to recognise social media's reputation credentials.



David Koczkar • 2nd
Chief Executive Officer Medibank
2w •

+ Follow ...

As investigations into the cybercrime against Medibank continue, we've made the decision not to pay the ransom to the criminal responsible for the data theft.

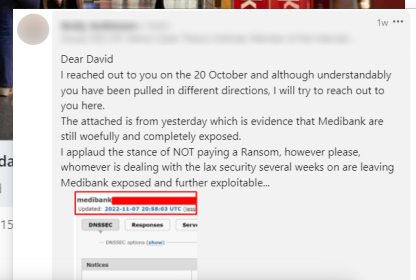
...see more



Medibank cybercrime update

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KEY FINDINGS.

5

SAFETY IN NUMBERS VS. GOING IT ALONE.

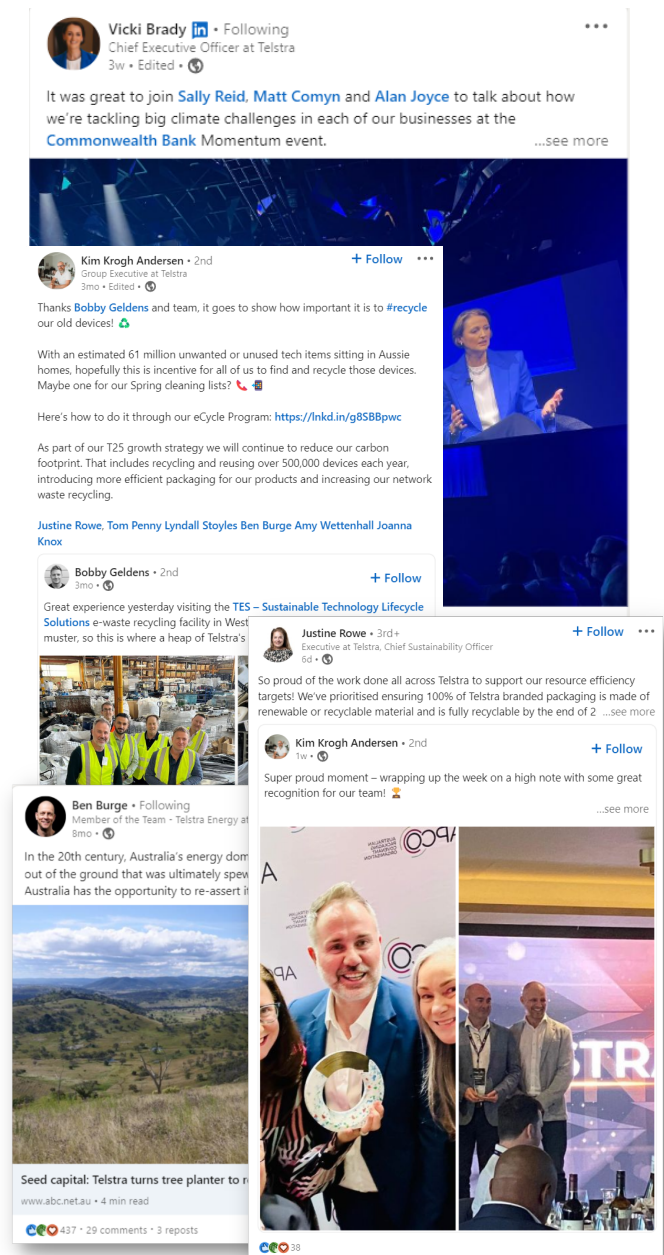
WHETHER RESPONDING TO REPUTATIONAL THREATS OR DISCUSSING MAJOR INITIATIVES (E.G. LEADERSHIP TRANSITION), CEOs ONLY STAND TO BENEFIT FROM TAPPING INTO COLLEAGUES AND INDUSTRY PEERS. A 'DIGITAL COALITION' ACTS AS ROCKET FUEL FOR POSITIVE MESSAGES, AND REPUTATIONAL SHIELD IN THE FACE OF THE DIGITAL MASSES.

When a CEO first commits to social media, there is an understandable tendency for communications advisors to focus all their attention on that leader's presence and activities. Over time, this focus limits growth - looking up and out offers far more potential.

A 'digital coalition' is the term given to a group of leaders working together as individuals online to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. This may be a leadership team using LinkedIn in a coordinated fashion to reach different audiences with a central message, or it can involve leaders from different organisations combining their voices on key social issues. Both are demonstrated by Telstra leaders and staff in the examples on the right.

Executed well, a digital coalition can drive performance and amplification of key messages, but also - importantly - has a trickle down effect to teams, empowering the broader workforce to get active online. This activation allows messages and initiatives to reach broader, more trusting audiences - via people they know. And, in turn, reduces key person risk and bottlenecks for leaders and their advisors.

This empowerment unlocks a 'diversity and depth' of supportive voices that not only creates one of the best talent attraction engines, but also a powerful advocacy and reputation management capability fit for the modern age.



ACTION: Make time to identify key stakeholders and allies for your leaders. Conduct an online audit of your stakeholders and map those who could be approached to work collaboratively with your leaders.



WHATEVER ANYONE DOES IN THE ONLINE SPACE - WHETHER THEY'RE ON BOARDS, IN THE C-SUITE OR OTHER TIERS OF LEADERSHIP - THEY [MUST BE] AWARE OF THE RISK OF NOT MATCHING THE TALK AND THE WALK TOGETHER.

THERE'S BIG RISK ASSOCIATED WITH MISALIGNMENT.

- Zora Artis
CEO | Artis Advisory Pty Ltd
Co-Founder | The Alignment People



HOW LEADERS CAN TAKE PURPOSEFUL STEPS ONLINE.

THE RESEARCH SHOWS ASX200 CEOS ARE ALL AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THEIR ONLINE JOURNEY, WITH THE MAJORITY YET TO FIND THEIR VOICE AND PLACE ONLINE. IN CONTRAST, THE PAST THREE YEARS HAVE SEEN WIDESPREAD AND DEEP ADOPTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG THE VERY STAKEHOLDERS LEADERS NEED TO REACH.

But this does not mean leaders should rush to play 'catch up'. The most effective steps any leader can take are *purposeful* ones. In this way, leaders can ensure they:

1. Understand the environment they're entering into;
2. Know which stakeholders are listening, where, and what they want to hear; and
3. Have a clear purpose for what they are trying to achieve.

This is the best way to mitigate risk, increase chances of success, and give leaders the opportunity to harness their social media presence in a safe, sustainable and strategic way.

Propel's Four Stages of Digital Maturity help leaders and their communications advisors identify where they are today, and chart a clear course for where they need to be.



HOW LEADERS CAN TAKE PURPOSEFUL STEPS ONLINE.

4

COALITION

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

1. Leaders think collaboratively with a 'we' vs 'me' mindset on LinkedIn, considering who they can work with to achieve greatest impact rather than going it alone.
2. Leaders proactively support others - both internally and externally - who may be better placed to deliver certain messages to help reach a shared outcome sooner.
3. Leaders regularly seek opportunities to partner with industry peers - even competitors - to harness exponential reach and amplification benefits of others' social networks.

3

COMPETENCY

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

1. Rather than rely on others for content ideas and engagement opportunities, leaders proactively generate content, seek opportunities to network, and seamlessly engage with others.
2. Leaders move swiftly to capitalise on opportunities as they arise, choosing the right method of engagement on LinkedIn (e.g. private message) intuitively.
3. Leaders switch between communication channels intentionally, using LinkedIn for strategic effect based on their desired outcomes.

2

CONSISTENCY

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

1. Regular posting rhythm (note: there is no 'magic number' for posts, but at least 2-3x per month given what leaders are expected to address) on issues linked to the business and stakeholder needs.
2. Regular engagement - reactions and comments - with key stakeholder groups on content they post relevant to a leader's areas of focus (e.g. ~10 per week in total).
3. Soliciting feedback from stakeholders in comments or via private messages that shows an interest in their posts and views.

1

COMMITMENT

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

1. A complete, accurate profile that reflects what a leader stands for and their expertise.
2. Building a network of credible contacts (>500 connections) related to key stakeholder groups.
3. Infrequent posting on key issues or initiatives (e.g. 1-2 per month), with more frequent reactions and comments (e.g. 2-3 per week in total).

0

DIGITAL ANONYMITY

HOW TO PROGRESS

3 → 4

- Facilitate a strategic planning session with your leadership team to define shared goals for social media, and clarify who will focus on each key stakeholder group and theme/issue to support alignment and coordination across the company.
- Conduct a digital footprint audit of your leaders' key stakeholders to aid monitoring and engagement opportunities.
- Provide training and enablement for leadership peers and staff (where appropriate) to extend LinkedIn activities and activate unique voices across the company.

2 → 3

- Establish regular content meetings with your leader, providing an opportunity for them to plan for and execute key LinkedIn comms efforts themselves in their own voice.
- Provide regular insights reports to help your leader better understand the views and attitudes of key stakeholder groups, informing the way they engage online.
- Provide your leaders with monthly performance reports, helping them see which of their efforts generates strongest results based on key objectives.

1 → 2

- Develop a LinkedIn content calendar capturing the key themes, events and issues your leader wishes to cover.
- Embed daily, weekly and monthly posting, moderation and listening workflows that help leaders quickly identify and execute engagement opportunities.
- Refine your leader's LinkedIn feeds to 'coach' the algorithm and improve the relevance and quality of content they see.

0 → 1

- Conduct an online audit for your leader to surface key stakeholders, relevant conversation topics and examples that will help build their awareness of what's happening on social media.
- Discuss audit findings, and how they would like to appear online.
- Work with your leader to optimise their LinkedIn profile, identify relevant contacts, and configure security and notification settings to their liking.



WHETHER YOU'RE ACTIVE OR NOT - WHETHER YOU *LIKE IT* OR NOT - YOU NOW HAVE A DIGITAL REPUTATION.

THE REAL QUESTION FOR LEADERS IS THIS: WILL YOU ACTIVELY INFLUENCE HOW OTHERS SEE YOU, OR WILL YOU LEAVE YOUR REPUTATION IN THE HANDS OF THE DIGITAL MASSES?

- Roger Christie
Founder & Managing Director | Propel





GET IN TOUCH.

Contact us to discuss the findings of this report in more detail, or to learn how your CEO compares with industry benchmarks. We'd love to help you start the conversation around how you can protect and enhance your leader's digital reputation.



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WHO'S PROPEL?

WE ARE PROPEL. A MULTI AWARD-WINNING ADVISORY FIRM THAT HELPS LEADERS PROTECT + ENHANCE THEIR MOST VISIBLE + VALUABLE PROFESSIONAL ASSET: THEIR DIGITAL REPUTATION.

Propel was founded in 2013 from communications, social media + reputation management origins. Since then we have worked with clients across the ASX200, progressive NGOs, and almost 50 federal and state government agencies.

We've helped our clients manage a wide range of sensitive reputational + operational threats in the face of the digital masses. And we've worked hand-in-hand with leaders to help them build the confidence + competence they need to thrive in today's digital world.

We are a team of specialists with experience across the full spectrum of social media + digital communications. We provide a range of services including: digital footprint audits + listening; strategic communications planning; digital profile optimisation; executive + communications coaching; + risk assessments.

Our founder + managing director Roger Christie also hosts the *Your Digital Reputation podcast* + facilitates the Government Digital Leaders Network.



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