# Manual for Citizen Journalists – Election ‘07

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Welcome to youdecide2007!

Want to make your local MP more accountable this election? Tired of election coverage that ignores your local area and the issues that count?

Become a citizen journalist with YouDecide2007.

At YouDecide2007 you can submit your own copy straight into the system. Everything that meets legal requirements will be published in YouDecide Raw, and outstanding articles will be included in YouDecide Premium.

We will be publishing:
* News
* Opinion
* Candidate Media releases

This can take the form of:
* In-depth reports about local seats
* Multimedia – video, photos and audio
* Debate and comment

You'll publish under your own name and you will have your own byline. You'll have influence, and who knows, you might even launch yourself a new career.

YouDecide2007 is an Australian Research Council funded project. The project partners are SBS, On Line Opinion, the Brisbane Institute and QUT's Creative Industries Faculty. Apart from being an authoritative news service it will also provide Australian academics with a better understanding of how these sorts of sites work.

This manual tells you more about citizen journalism, how to submit your content, and more.
How do I become a citizen journalist on youdecide2007?

Citizen journalism can take many forms. For this particular project, though, we are looking for people to be anchor correspondents in key seats who have some of the following attributes/capacities.

- **An interest in national politics.** This is so that you will be an effective contributor, but also so that you will enjoy the experience of participating in a community-based, grassroots coverage of the election.

- **An interest in the issues and concerns in your local area.** Since we are looking for people who want to cover their local area, it will be necessary for you to have an interest in the issues that are important to the people who live around you. Like any journalist, you will be giving voice to the concerns of the public, and occasionally trying to call members and aspirants to account on issues of local import. Since we are emphasising factual reporting, a good knowledge of your neighbourhood will help you to contextualise local issues for your readership.

- **A willingness to develop your reporting skills.** Through your involvement with youdecide2007, you will have an opportunity to improve your capacity for news- and opinion writing in consultation with the editorial team and the site community. Whether or not you already have news or feature writing experience, this is an opportunity to develop your communications skills for a national audience.

- **An interest in providing some fact-based reporting.** We expect and welcome a wide range of political views in this project – that's the “citizen” side of the equation. But the “journalist” aspect of your role is equally important. In order to make the site useful to the broadest possible base of users, we will be looking for some fact-based reporting from anchor correspondents, which aims to give a fair hearing to many
sides of an issue. There is a brief primer on journalistic practice below, but in general, aim to submit stories where facts are checked, information sourced, and which aim to inform your audience as to goings-on in your area. Content that meets these guidelines will be more likely to be featured on our premium pages.

- **Access to a computer and an Internet connection.** You decide2007 editors will be only be accepting copy submissions electronically, for ease of editing and use. You will need to submit stories from where you are. Also, we hope that all citizen journalists will be active members of our online community in discussion and debate. All this means you need reasonably reliable access to a computer that has an Internet connection. If you don’t have this at home, many public libraries, schools, universities and other community organisations can provide it. Please let us know if you would like to participate but you anticipate problems with regular Internet access – we will try to advise you.

- **Understanding of the legal issues involved with researching, writing and publishing news and opinion.** As publishers of news, the you decide2007 team have to be aware of the potential legal difficulties for news producers. Your pieces will be more likely to be featured in the site’s “front pages” if you have an awareness of them too, particularly the laws around defamation. There is a short primer further on in this manual, which includes pointers to further reading.

- **Reliable means of contact.** For legal and practical reasons, we will need to ask you for a wide range of contact information, including full name, address and mobile and landline phone numbers. There’s always the chance that we may pick up on a story in your area that you may wish to follow up, and we may need to talk to you in short order, so reliable contact information will be crucial. Needless to say, we will not pass your details on to any other individuals or organisations, or to other community members.
• **Confidence and initiative.** As the project builds momentum and its audience, local members and candidates and community leaders will want to talk to us. In the first instance, though, we certainly hope that you will want to talk to them. The confidence to approach MPs, contenders and opinion leaders will build with your involvement in the project, but all citizen journalists must be willing to ask the questions that they and their community want answered.

• **A thick skin.** You decide 2007 sources pieces from the public, but occasionally your work may be altered by our editorial team, particularly where legal issues come up. You might not always make it onto the premium pages. Also, readers will be able to comment on your work, and occasionally there may be heated discussion. Knowing your work has a solid basis in fact will help you to react calmly to online criticism, and an understanding of our needs as publishers will mean that your work has a greater chance of appearing as you wrote it, but the ability to take constructive criticism may need to be exercised from time to time.

• **Access to multimedia devices** – e.g. digital video/stills camera, digital recording equipment. We would like to be able to feature as wide a range of content as is possible, and perhaps publish your interviews and records of campaign events as audio or video streams. We will attempt to establish a viral presence across a range of sites, and video and audio content will gain a larger audience for your citizen journalism than text alone would. If you only want to write, that’s fine, but access to digital equipment will enable you to submit a wider range of material to us.

• **Transport.** For many citizen journalists, particularly those in metropolitan areas, public transport will be a good enough means of accessing different parts of the electorate. For those in more spread out, rural electorates, though, private transport that enables you to access parts of the electorate other than where you live may be useful. This is not a barrier
to participation, though, and telecommunications are a normal part of every journalist’s toolkit.
Journalism – A brief primer.

For those with no history as journalists, we hope that the process of engaging with youdecide2007 will provide you with some valuable experiences and insights. For those with some experience, we hope that you will be challenged by the experience of reporting in a new kind of media environment. All anchor journalists should be aware of some basic issues that should inform reporting in Australia, and for this specific project.

It is useful to know some fundamentals of newswriting, so that your submitted pieces will be framed in a way that brings the youdecide community to your work. Also, like any other news provider, youdecide2007 and its community operate within the framework of Australian law, and all of us must be aware of the legal constraints on what, how and about whom we can legitimately publish news. The following sections give overviews of the basics of newswriting and the laws that govern reportage in Australia, but it is worth noting the editorial team are always available for consultation in the course of your work.

Newswriting basics.

Like fiction, report writing or any other genre, newswriting has characteristic features and principles that can inform our presentation of the news. A brief outline of the fundamentals of newswriting here will help you to aim for the kind of clear, conversational but fact-based style that characterises the best (and best-read) online writing. There is no substitute in your training as a newswriter, though, for looking closely at what other professional and citizen journalists do in their own stories, and noting what is effective and also where reporting lets itself down.
For the fact-based reporting that the youdecide2007 project will prioritize, newswriting professionals have long identified a set of questions that good a story should answer, known as the “5 Ws and an H”:

1. WHO is involved?
2. WHAT has happened?
3. WHERE did it take place?
4. WHEN did it take place?
5. WHY did it happen?
6. HOW did it happen?

This is the sort of information which should be apparent quite quickly to readers reading your story; the consequences of the events you report on, and the complications or possibilities arising from it, can come up later in your story. Your own reading of newspapers, online news sites, and the best citizen journalism will show that in many examples of newswriting, journalists have answered all of these questions within a few sentences.

While citizen journalism and online formats may seem to offer fewer restrictions than the print forms that newswriting conventions evolved with, readers are accustomed to receiving news in a certain style of presentation. Your work will be more widely read if you make it clear, direct and easy to read.

Online newswriting is not exactly like print newswriting, and you should be aiming for an informal tone that is similar to the kind of writing that broadcast presenters read. Wulfemeyer (2006) calls this tone “chatting up readers”. He suggests a number of pointers

- Use simple, declarative sentences.
- Limit your use of phrases and clauses.
- Pretend that you are telling a story to a friend, rather than trying to impress an employer.
• Use simple and colourful words, and avoid formal, convoluted writing.
• Assume you are writing for someone who is busy.
• In general, make it easy for readers to read, understand and enjoy what you have written. (In our case, we might add, make it easy for readers to understand and interact with your newswriting).
• Avoid open bias – your work will have more authority and be more persuasive if you present fact rather than outright opinion.

For the purposes of our project, it’s safe to say that clearly-written, informative, engaging material about the battle for your local electorate will always have a chance of being featured prominently on our site.

Newsgathering.

Newswriting is an important way to get your stories read and featured on the site, but of course it’s necessary to find ways to gather the information you present. There are a number of different ways to research your story, including interviews and press conferences and secondary research.

In general, it is good practice to establish a contact book, including the contact details and a small amount of information about important local people you have talked to, and who you may call on again in the future. this will be an important resource to you as the campaign develops.

Interviews

As a citizen journalist, you will need to speak to a range of people in your electorate in order to give a thorough, balanced coverage. We
can divide the people you will need to talk to at some point in the election into a number of categories.

- **Candidates** These are the people at the centre of the political drama in any electorate – the people who are running for office. Interviews with them and (if applicable) their staff are the way to get a direct insight into what candidates are standing for, what they see as the key local and national issues, and what they think of their opponents. When interviewing candidates and their staff, put questions that you think will be compelling to readers, and that the community will want answers to. Remember that, although it is permissible to ask “the tough questions”, polite interactions with candidates, however much you might disagree with them personally, will allow further opportunities to talk with them. Do not be intimidated by candidates, or hesitant to approach them – most of them are seeking as much coverage during the election as they can possibly muster.

- **Community and opinion leaders** These are the people who represent powerful or import local interests, community groups, or political pressure organisations, and who are active in trying to influence debates in the local area. Every electorate will have local issues that play out during the campaign, and local activists who will try to influence candidates, and through them their parties, in matters of policy. Imparting the cut and thrust of local politics, and how it interacts with a broader election agenda, will be important, and finding out positions first hand from opinion leaders will lend credibility and drama to your pieces.

- **Experts** There will be occasions when it makes sense to consult local academics, scientists, planners, police or even military personnel for an expert insight into a particular aspect of a story or issue. Often they will be happy to speak with you, occasionally they may be debarred from doing so. Do not overtax your contacts in these areas, but do use them when you need to sort out contending claims on an issue, test the
truth of what other subjects have told you, or get in-depth information on a campaign issue.

- **Ordinary voters.** Candidates and opinion leaders may have their own ideas about what’s important in the election campaign, but local people may have surprisingly different priorities. One of the great advantages for citizen journalists, and hyperlocal coverage, is that we are able to access local opinion which may go “under the radar” of national or even local press, and catch a mood in particular electorates that might escape the big, “top down” media concerns. Talking to ordinary voters is, of course, the best way to access the opinions of the people who really matter – the electors! You can incorporate your conversations with voters into your stories, or do specific “vox pop” features.

Doing interviews is a process that may be helped by a technological investment – unless you know shorthand, some means of voice recording (or even video recording) will be invaluable. Interview subjects (and especially candidates) may become upset if you misquote them. If you do use any recording equipment, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with its operation before you talk to people – there are few things more frustrating than conducting a good interview and then finding that the recorder has not been switched on.

When carrying out interviews, try to maintain a courteous and professional demeanour, even when dealing with those whose opinions you passionately disagree with. You may want to talk further with them in the future, that won’t happen if your interview degenerates into a shouting match. Eesha Williams’ Grassroots Journalism (2000) has many hints on how to square your own political beliefs with the persuasive power of an objective stance in reporting and interviewing.

**Secondary research**
First-hand interviews are great, but secondary research is also essential. To understand previous election results, and the history of the electorate, sources like the AEC’s website, ABC election special summaries, and local and national media archives are essential. Similarly, specific issues that you are following up, organisations or individuals you are dealing with, or particular policies or promises will have a large archive of information available which can inform your stories.

In general, decide early on a way to manage the information you are uncovering in your research. This could be anything from notebooks and filing cabinets to a filing system on your computer to a Del.icio.us account for your important links. In general, your aim is to be able to call up important information quickly and easily.

In general, the Internet is the researcher's best friend. Learning how to search the Web efficiently is a skill that takes some learning, but is worthwhile. Finding and bookmarking key websites like candidates’ websites, local news outlets, party organisations and activist groups will allow you to keep up with what is happening in your electorate. An email address book with important contacts will help you get in touch with people quickly. A subscription to relevant email lists and RSS subscriptions to relevant blogs will assist you in keeping tabs of things close to home and the election overall.

Offline resources are also important. Local libraries will hold archives of local newspapers and publications, and community groups will have their own files on the issues that interest them. Government agencies can also be a rich source of information, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in particular, can give you a deeper insight into the nature of your local area.

Combining secondary research and primary interviews will yield good, compelling stories, and may mean that you are able to “break” stories that the mainstream media is unable to follow up. Stories with solid fundamentals and research are more likely to be picked up by partners.
**Legal factors.**

In Australia, there is no explicit constitutional guarantee of free speech, and the right of journalists to report on aspects of public life is routinely challenged in the courts. Perhaps the most important aspects of law that apply to journalistic practice are the laws of copyright, defamation and contempt, which apply to everyone who publishes in Australia in old and new media formats. Like all other Australian media outlets, the youdecide2007 project will be subject to these laws, and the editorial team will necessarily have to scrutinise submissions with legal concerns in mind.

**Copyright**

Copyright laws protect the intellectual property of individuals and organisations. Despite the recent debates about the relevance of intellectual property in the digital age, these laws are still very much in force, and actionable.

The laws of copyright as they apply to the youdecide2007 project prevent us featuring previously published material, except where it is clearly sourced and acknowledged. Wherever possible, citizen journalists should generate original material. Where other people’s writing or multimedia content is used, you should clearly indicate to the editorial team what the material is and where it came from. Put simply, you should not use material that someone else has authored without letting us and your readers know.

Information on how copyright issues are dealt with at the Queensland University of Technology, which is the principal university involved in supporting and managing this project, can be found in this Copyright guide.
Defamation

The laws of defamation exist to protect the reputations of people under media scrutiny. It has long been argued that they represent an unacceptable restriction on press freedom in this country. Nevertheless, the laws are in place, and youdecide2007 must abide by them.

In the heat of a federal election campaign, where candidates are suddenly aware of a new source of reporting on them by non-professional journalists, there may be some sensitivity around the possibility of defamatory reporting. The entire youdecide2007 team needs to be aware of the rules governing our reportage,

The Communications Law Centre has identified the circumstances under which defamation action can be brought by someone who feels that they have been defamed (a “plaintiff”).

In order to bring a defamation action a plaintiff must show three things. Firstly the material must have been published, which in this context means that it has been communicated to someone other than the aggrieved person. Most commonly this takes the form of a newspaper publication or television or radio broadcast. The publication of books also gives rise to a number of defamation actions. Secondly the person aggrieved by the publication must have been identified by that publication. Identification need not be by naming the person. It can arise from the inclusion of a number of characteristics that enable a person to be identified. Where a group of people have been collectively defamed, provided the group is limited in size, each member of that group may be a potential plaintiff. Finally the material published must be defamatory. In terms of a legal test material is defamatory if it does one of four things - expose a person to ridicule; lower their reputation in the eyes of members of the community;
cause people to shun; or avoid them or injure their professional reputation. (Communications Law Centre, Undated):

In other words, if something has been published, if it aggrieves the person who it has been published about, and if it is defamatory (exposes them to ridicule, lowers their reputation, causes people to shun them or harms their professional reputation, it is defamatory. As you can see, this leaves plaintiffs broad scope for action.

There are circumstances under which it can be argued that the public’s interest outweighs the rights of the plaintiff not to be defamed. Perhaps the most important of these is truth. If the material in a report is demonstrably true, and if comment is based on fact, this is enough to defend against a defamation action. This means well-sourced, well-supported factual reporting is as important in the youdecide2007 project as it would be to commercial, mainstream media outlets.

As a result of these laws, the editorial team will occasionally need to make sensitive legal judgements. But citizen journalists can complete a checklist as they submit material, and if in doubt, let the editorial team know that the submission may need to be checked.

Ask:

- Is anyone presented in an adverse light, in a way that is likely to offend them?
- Are they identifiable?

AND

- Can I prove that what I have written is true?
- Is it in the public interest that the facts of my story are published?
- Are the opinions I express based on fact?
If the answers to the first two questions is “yes”, and the last three “no”, it may be that your story is defamatory – please consult the editorial team.

Contempt

The contempt laws exist to assist courts to carry out their proceedings in an orderly and complete way. In relation to journalists, contempt laws often come into play when journalists refuse to reveal the identities of their sources in court proceedings, or report in inappropriate ways on ongoing proceedings. These circumstances are unlikely to arise in relation to youdecide2007, but if you are concerned about protecting the identity of a source, please consult the editorial team.
Community interaction online

The biggest change that new media has brought about – for mainstream media and for citizen journalists – is that the public is able to offer feedback as stories as soon as they are published, and enter into dialogue with the writers. This carries enormous benefits. Journalists can gauge reactions to their stories, receive more information from the public, and the insight they gain into what readers are thinking can inform further reporting. The readership can be more involved with the production of news, and engage with other readers around particular topics of interest. In the “produsage” environment of citizen journalism, these two strands can effectively meld into a community of reader-writers, conducting extended discussions around the issues of the day.

The potential pitfalls of such communities, though, particularly when they are convened around political issues that people care passionately about, are that interaction can degenerate into open conflict. If a community becomes bogged down in abusive forms of debate, newcomers are often turned off, and discussion can become sidetracked into personal conflict.

As a citizen journalist, you should be prepared for the occasional circumstance of people commenting harshly on your work. The editorial team will do what we can to limit unfair or overly personal abuse, but you can do your part too by reacting to personal criticism in a number of productive ways.

Consider the criticism as a sign that your work is attracting attention and hitting the mark – try to think about criticism as a positive sign that your work is being read and understood, and that people want to engage with it.
• Think about how to respond positively to criticism. Can you drag the discussion back onto the topic you were first interested in? Can you ask the commenter to expand on or clarify their criticism in a way that takes the heat out of the discussion? Can you add an open-ended question that attracts other readers to support your initial take on events? Remember – if you react gracefully to criticism, readers’ sympathies will usually be with you rather than the person who attacked your work.

• Think about your own style in making comments on other peoples’ work. Try to be constructive and to ask clarifying questions in your own comments, in an effort to build a culture of civility on the site.

• If you feel that criticism has been unacceptable – e.g. it involves abuse based on gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality etc., or it is mostly a personal attack on you or someone else in the community, please report it to the youdecide2007 editorial team. This should be a last resort, though: along with abusive behaviour, heavy-handed editorial intervention can be destructive to a community.

Remember, this is your community as much as ours, so your actions are important in setting the tone of how the community operates.
Further Reading.

A range of further reading has been tagged at Our delicious tag page. This material covers the basics of citizen journalism and newswriting, the Australian political and electoral landscape, newgathering practice, file handling and more. As well as reading this material, citizen journalists with a del.icio.us account are encouraged to tag anything useful with “youdecide2007”, and it will then appear on this list.

Works cited in this manual, and some further reading, is listed below.


Registration and submission procedures.

The website for youdecide2007 is based on Joomla!, an open source content-management system. It offers user-friendly tools for registration, content submission, editing and social interaction. The following part of the manual shows you how to register, submit content and explains some of our editorial processes.

Please keep in mind that this is a web based interface so response times following your actions (ie saving, changing justifications, adding bullet points, inserting images etc) may take a while. Please be patient.

Registration

Go to the website at http://youdecide2007.org and follow the “Register” link on the front page. The registration page looks like this:
Enter your details in the provided fields – only the first four fields are mandatory (i.e. you must provide your name, a username, and you must enter and confirm your password). PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF YOUR USERNAME AND PASSWORD AND KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE – THESE ARE YOUR KEYS TO THE SITE. The form should look something like this when it is completed.
If you wish to register as a citizen journalist, you must tick the box at the bottom of the form. This will let the youdecide2007 team give you the permissions to contribute – the content submission process is dealt with in the next section.

When you have finished completing your details, hit “send registration”. You will then need to check the email account you have provided, and you will need to click the link in the automated email sent by the site. This will
confirm your registration. Your confirmation email will look something like this.

**Joomla Dev Area III-Your Registration is Pending Approval**

![Image of email content]

**Greetings Kelly Hussey-Smith,**
Thank you for applying for registration with us. We have received your request and we will process it as soon as you confirm your email address by clicking on the following hyperlink:

&task=confirm&confirmcode=req48415ea7bdeab15a/ec7c5dc2c5/be3041aaf1

Once your email address is confirmed our moderators will be notified to continue the activation process. You will be notified by email of the progress of the process.
Email: kelly.hussey.smith@gmail.com
User Name: Kelly

Kind Regards,
Website Administration Team

NOTE: This email was automatically generated from Joomla Dev Area III (https://cmjoomlc.devgamma

Clicking on the link takes you to a page confirming your registration. You can then return to the front page and log in for the first time. Enter your user name and password on the front page and hit the log-in button. You will be taken to your youdecide2007 profile page, which will look something like this:
Now you can begin adding information to your profile by hitting the “edit” button – you can enter information about yourself, and even a profile image. Your profile will help you engage with users and contributors to youdecide2007, and readers will be able to identify your contributions.

ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE NOMINATED AND BEEN CONFIRMED AS CITIZEN JOURNALISTS WILL BE ABLE TO SUBMIT STORY CONTENT, THOUGH ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS OF THE YOUDECIDE2007 COMMUNITY WILL BE ABLE TO COMMENT AND INTERACT ON THE SITE. TO BE ELIGIBLE TO BE A COMMUNITY JOURNALIST YOU MUST PROVIDE US WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AS THEY APPEAR IN THE ELECTORAL ROLL. CITIZEN JOURNALISTS CANNOT BE ANONYMOUS.
**Submissions**

If you have been registered by the team as a citizen journalist, it’s time to start submitting content! There are three separate content submission procedures: one for text and photos, one for audio and one for video. What follows is a step-by-step guide for all three kinds – we’d encourage all of you to think about how you can generate all kinds of content from your electorate!

**Text and Photos**

On the left hand side of the page there is a user menu with content submission links:

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User Menu
My YouDecide
Other Users
Submit Content
Submit Audio
Submit YouTube
Video
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For text and photos, click “submit content”. You will be taken to a page that looks like the one below:
This is a content editing window. It’s here that you can add text and pictures for your stories.

For text-only content, simply add a title for your submission and type in your text. As you are typing, regularly hit the “Apply” button (the blue one with a tick on it) to preserve your edits as you go. There is some formatting available that should be familiar to most users of word processing software. At the top of the edit window, there are buttons to apply formatting to text.

As a rule, you should keep formatting to a minimum, as your content will undergo some formatting in the editing process. Focus instead on accurate typing and be especially careful with quotes from interview subjects.
If you have images as well, you can insert these at specific points in the story. Put the cursor at the point in the story where you want your image inserted. There is an image button at the top of the window (circled in the detail below).

Pressing this begins the image submission process, and opens a window that looks like this:
To upload an image from your computer, place your pointer on the “upload” button on the right hand side and half-way down this window:

![Image upload window](image1.png)

Pressing this button activates another window that allows you to browse your own computer for the image file you wish to upload:

![Image upload dialog box](image2.png)
Hitting the browse button (which the red arrow above is pointing to) allows you to find files on your own hard drive which you can insert as images in your report. How you take images and get them onto your computer will vary with the kind of camera you are using. Make sure that you own the copyright for the images (e.g. you took them) or that you have the appropriate permissions to use them (consult the youdecide2007 team if you are unsure about any copyright matters).

When you have selected a file from your computer, it should show up in the “file” window, and you can name the file (be sure to give your images names unique to them).

Once you’ve pressed “Ok”, the image will be uploaded. It will then appear in the directory of uploaded files, as in the picture below:
When selected, it will appear in the preview pane at the right hand side of the window. Pressing “Insert” will position the image in the place where you originally put the cursor in the edit window:
If you have more than one image, simply repeat this process. N.B. DO NOT RESIZE IMAGES – LEAVE IT IN THE ORIGINAL SIZE AND YOUDECIDE2007 EDITORS WILL CREATE A THUMBNAIL IN YOUR STORY THAT OPENS THE ORIGINAL, FULL-SCALE IMAGE.

Once you are happy with your content, hit the “save” button.

You will then be navigated away from the edit page to the front page, and you will get a message at the top of the screen telling you that your content has been submitted.
As with other content, your text and picture submissions will go to the “back end” where youdecide2007 editors will check it for legals and accuracy, and assign it a space on the youdecide2007 site.

**Audio Submissions**

From the user menu on the left hand side of your screen, select “Submit Audio”

From here, you will be led to a page which enables you to browse your own computer for audio files.

Hitting the “Browse” button will allow you access to your own files. When you have selected one by clicking on it, it will appear in the window next to the browse button
When you then press “upload audio”, you will be taken to a screen that asks you for a short description of your submission, a shorter description for search engines, and some keywords.
Once you have filled these out, hitting “submit audio” at the bottom of the screen will take you to a screen that confirms your submission.

As with other content, your audio will then go to the “back end” of the site for legal checking and editing by youdecide2007 staff.

Unless there is a problem with your content, the audio material will be published soon after.

**Video content**

Uploading video content is a two-step process on youdecide2007. For formatting and bandwidth reasons, and so that video content gets a wider distribution and audience, we are asking citizen journalists to upload their video content to YouTube first, and then embed materials on the site. A guide to signing up to YouTube and uploading content is here on the YouTube site.


If you have trouble with this process. Please contact us.
We ask that you add the tag “youdecide2007” to video content you upload, so that project videos will be searchable with this tag on YouTube.

Once you have signed up to YouTube and uploaded video content, each video you upload will be given a unique URL. You can find this URL just to the right of the video window, as underlined below.

Once you have this URL, go back to the youdecide2007 site, where you can embed the video in the site as youdecide2007 content.

At the youdecide2007 site, you will be asked for part of this URL – the **segment after the equals sign**, which you should paste or type into the window provided.
When you have pasted it in, hit the “Submit You Tube ID” button.

This will bring you to a screen with a preview of the video you have submitted.
If the video has been submitted successfully, you can fill out the windows asking for a brief description of the video, a short description for search engines, and a list of search engine keywords for the video (these should include the electorate you are covering, and the names of candidates who appear in the video).
You should then press the “Submit Video” button at the bottom of the page. Once you have done this, you will be taken to a page confirming your submission.

As with all youdecide2007 submissions, your video will be checked by editorial staff and, if there are no legal or other problems, it will be published not long after you submit.

Categories

Youdecide2007 is split into two major sections - Premium and Raw. Articles, videos, audio and pictures may be also classified as news, opinion and media releases.
All articles approved for publication will automatically appear in Raw. Raw will use user ranking and moderation systems to determine what news is the most important.

Selected articles will be published in Premium. Premium will select only from Raw and will use more traditional “gate-keeping” strategies to decide what should appear.

This project is Australian Research Council funded research. Apart from thinking that it is a good idea to have a “Siamese twin” publishing format, we will be taking an academic interest in how readers use the two different manifestations of our publication.
Last Thoughts

We’re hoping not only to produce citizen-led coverage of the election, but to help people re-engage with representative democracy. We hope you agree that covering the election in this way might help us work towards making local politicians answerable to the people they represent.

Apart from anything else, youdecide2007 should be a lot of fun! Remember, if you run into any problems, you can call the hotline during office hours [(07)31380154] or drop us an email at j5.wilson@qut.edu.au

Good hunting, and please check the website, submit content and interact as often as you can – youdecide2007 is yours to enjoy!