


THE SOCIAL SILOS OF JOURNALISM

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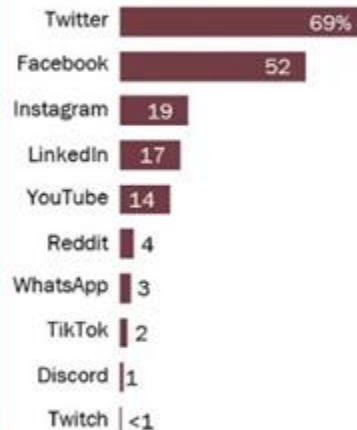


INTRODUCTION

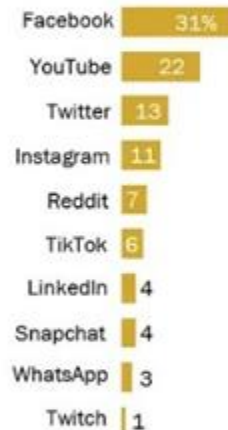


- **Journalism is evolving with social media.** Twitter has become a major tool for journalists to source information and engage with audiences.
- **Problem Statement:** How does a journalist's Twitter network influence the partisan slant of their news reporting? (Wihbey et al., 2019)
- **Research Importance:** Understanding whether online interactions shape news content can provide insights into bias, media echo chambers, and political polarization.

*% of U.S. journalists who say —
s the social media site they use
most or second most in their job*



*% of U.S. adults who say they
regularly get news on ...*





RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- **Historical Context:** Journalism and bias have long been studied through agenda-setting and framing theories (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Patterson, 2013).
- **Modern Influence of Social Media:** Journalists increasingly rely on Twitter for research and sourcing (Santana & Hopp, 2016).
- **Study Focus:** Exploring the relationship between Twitter followings and news partisanship (Wihbey et al., 2019).



An iceberg floating in water, divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is above the water line and is labeled 'COMPUTATIONAL BIASES'. The middle section is submerged and labeled 'HUMAN BIASES'. The bottom section is also submerged and labeled 'SYSTEMIC BIASES'. The water level is indicated by a horizontal line.

**COMPUTATIONAL
BIASES**

**HUMAN
BIASES**

**SYSTEMIC
BIASES**

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

- Does a journalist's Twitter network influence the partisanship of their news reporting?
- Hypothesis: Journalists who follow more partisan accounts on Twitter are likely to produce news with a similar ideological slant.



METHODOLOGY

- **644 journalists from 25 U.S. news outlets.**
- **Data:** Twitter followings and 300,000+ news articles analyzed for ideological leanings.
- **Approach:** Text scaling techniques were used to measure partisanship, and correlation analysis was conducted between journalists' online networks and published work (Wihbey et al., 2019).



Key Concepts

Social Media & Journalism

- Journalists increasingly use Twitter for research, sourcing, and engagement.
- Social media shapes journalistic routines and audience interaction.

Partisan Segregation in News

- Journalists' Twitter networks may influence the political leanings of their content.
- Political echo chambers can extend from social media to published news.



<https://www.google.com/search?imgurl=https://www.governance.org/2016/11/30/journalists-check-their-phones-while-working-in-the-longworth-building-on-capitol-hill/>

Journalists check their phones during the House leadership elections on Nov. 30, 2016, in the Longworth Building on Capitol Hill



Major Findings

Moderate Correlation Between Twitter & News Content

- Journalists' Twitter networks influence their reporting, but the effect is moderate.
- Right-leaning journalists produce more right-leaning content, and vice versa.

Stronger Partisan Alignment for Right-Leaning Outlets

- Conservative outlets (e.g., Breitbart, Washington Times) show stronger Twitter-news alignment.

Left-Leaning Outlets: Liberal Networks, Neutral Reporting

- The New York Times, Washington Post journalists follow left-leaning accounts but produce balanced content.
- Suggests editorial oversight limits bias in mainstream media.

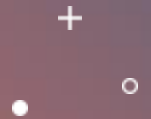


Inside The New York Times newsroom



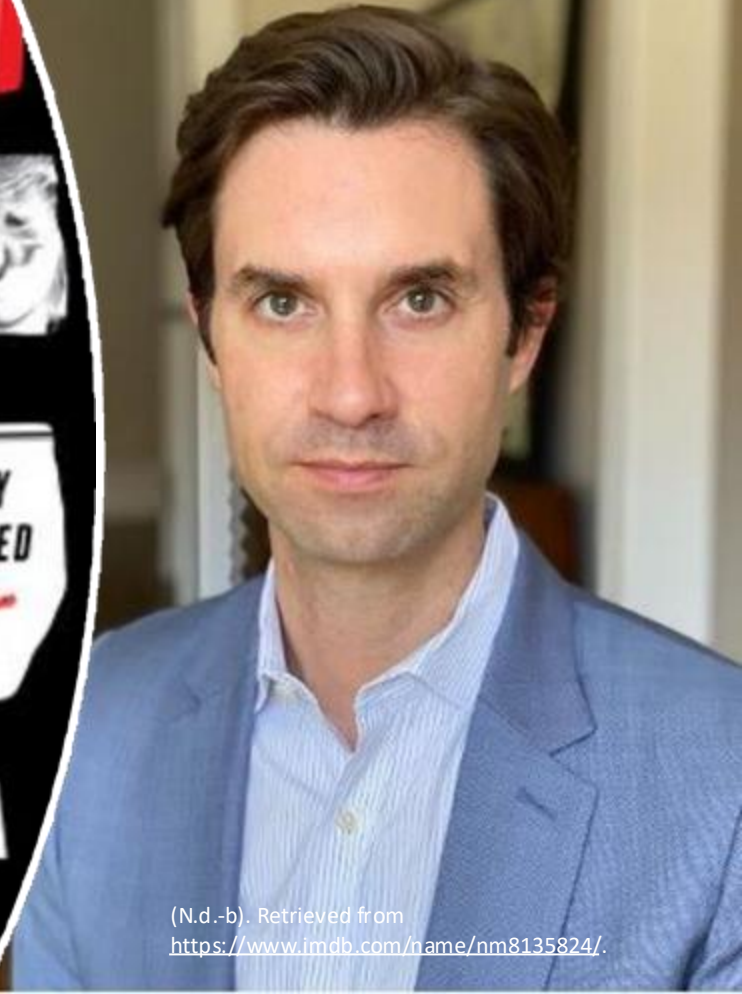
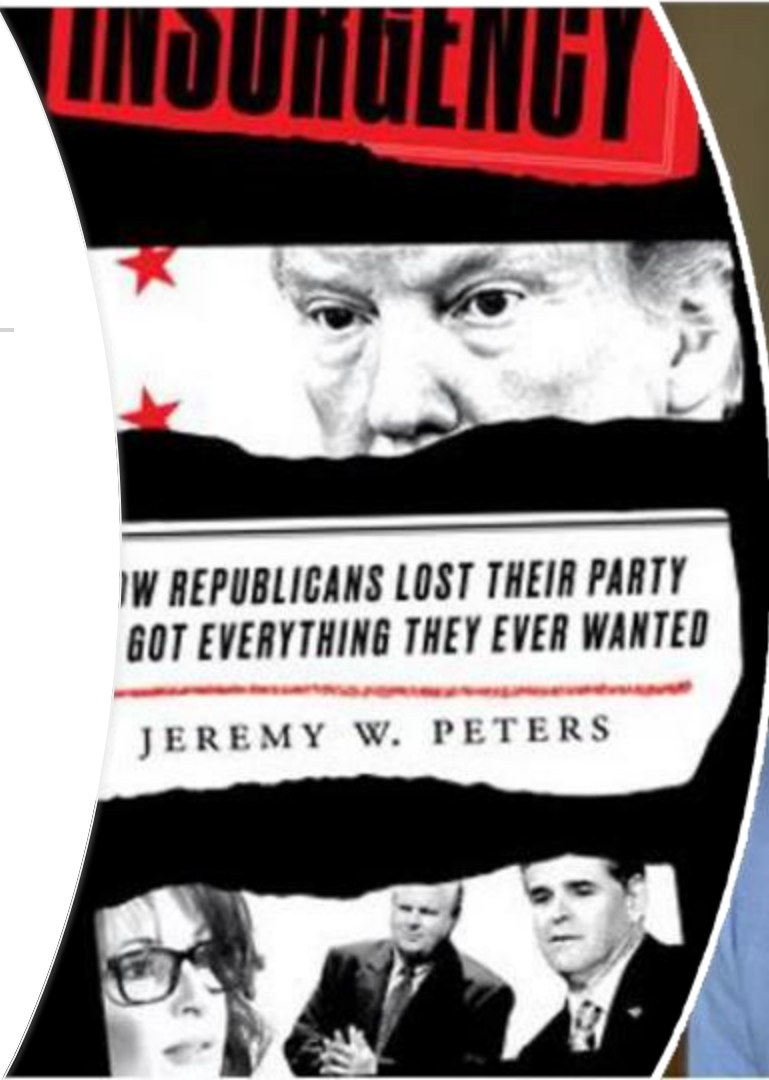
Silos in Journalism: Implications

Polarization in news consumption behavior



Jeremy W. Peters

A national reporter for The New York Times covers the debates surrounding freedom of speech and expression and their effects on key U.S. institutions. His extensive reporting includes three presidential campaigns: 2012, 2016, and 2020. While he tends to follow more right-leaning accounts, his writing maintains a neutral tone.



(N.d.-b). Retrieved from
<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm8135824/>.

Objectivity in Journalism

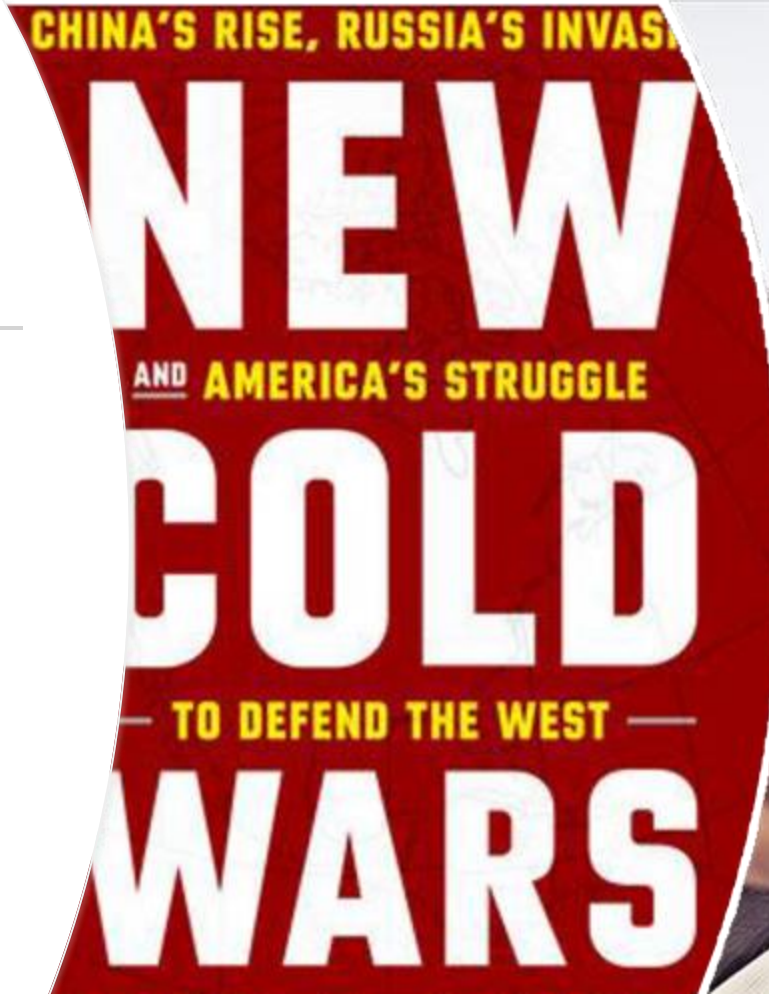
- *Three analytical dimensions of criticism (subjectivity, social inequities, power structures)*
- *Certain disagreements are minor and reconcilable while others are profound and existential.*




Ables, K. (2019, October 29). *Can photojournalists be entirely objective?* Artsy. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-photojournalists-entirely-objective>

David E. Sanger

White House and National Security Correspondent for The New York Times, reports on President Trump's administration and its impacts on foreign policy and superpower conflict. With over four decades at The Times, he has written four books on national security, including "New Cold Wars: China's Rise, Russia's Invasion and America's Struggle to Save the West." David shows how social media shapes public discourse in newsrooms.





In high-income democracies, we inhabit a media world dominated by digital and mobile platforms.

In the UK, about 2% are in a left-leaning echo chamber, while 5% are in a right-leaning one (Fletcher et al.) 2021b).

Suciu, P. (2025, January 31). *Social media remains a political echo chamber for the likeminded*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2025/01/31/social-media-remains-a-political-echo-chamber-for-the-likeminded/>

Why this matters:

Questions journalism's objectivity.

Highlights echo chambers and news segregation.

Shows social media's impact on newsrooms and public discourse.



How Social Media Affects Society. (n.d.). <https://www.apu.apus.edu/area-of-study/business-and-management/resources/how-social-media-sites-affect-society/>

Social Media Impact:

Media echo chambers in Canada?

Which journalist is more likely to be in an echo chamber?



TORONTO SUN



NATIONAL
POST



FINANCIAL
POST

A journalist who only reads these.

Media echo chambers in Canada?

What do you think?



CANADIAN
BROADCAST
COMPANY



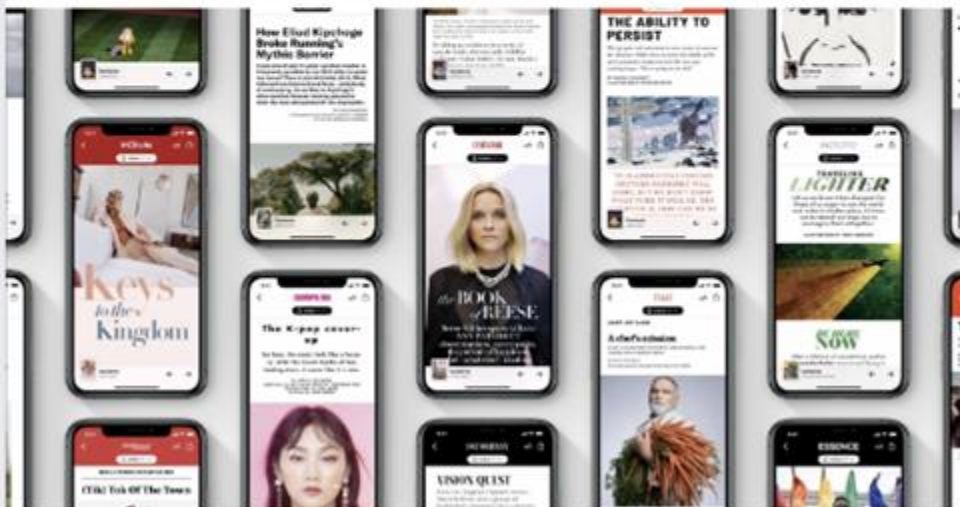
NATIONAL
POST



THE
NARWHAL

Or one who reads all of these.

What we consume, knowingly or unknowingly



“to our knowledge the first empirical study of journalists’ online social networks and connections with professional output. In an era when issues of political polarization and media bias are increasingly front-and-center, these connections between online social information environments and the way public information is produced are of major importance.” -John Wihbey pg.830

moral of the story, make sure to consider why something was written.

<https://www.macstories.net/news/apple-releases-ios-136-with-apple-news-audio-features-and-expanded-local-news-coverage-plus-digital-car-key-support/>

Social media & Polarization

- there is major segregation and growing polarization in online news consumption" (p. 4). Moreover, an important argument for a partisan shift follows a logic similar to that for narrowing of diversity: exposure to opinion-reinforcing information is high due to ideological segregation (path A), individuals prefer opinion-conforming information (path C), and algorithms reinforce these preferences

quote from

UNDERSTANDING ECHO CHAMBERS AND FILTER BUBBLES: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON DIVERSIFICATION AND PARTISAN SHIFTS IN NEWS CONSUMPTION.

MEDIA LESS OBJECTIVE

People could be getting completely different stories

LACK OF DIVERSE CONTENT

People may be getting content that pushes certain ideology, ideas or themes

ALGORITHMS AND OPINION REINFORCING

Algorithms show you what you want to see for engagement. You are the product and it wants to keep you engaged and it may even reinforce your ideas to do so.



Does audience engagement on social media shape journalists' editorial decisions?

Have you ever wondered if you're getting the most important news or if you're getting the news that people want to see? What's more important views or the hard hitting stories.



image from foxnews.com

40 %

Radio

67%

TV

80%

Internet

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Thank You!



**Any
Questions?**