Analyzing the Political Landscape of Reddit

Part 1: Are left-leaning or right-leaning Redditors engaging with posts more?

- Our objective was to explore the data and get a better understanding of the overall political landscape by selecting the top five subreddits for the left-leaning and right-leaning sides. Using subscriber counts to determine which were most popular, it became easier for us to make some generalizations regarding Redditor engagement based on the data available, while narrowing down our focus subreddits for our deeper dive.

  Once narrowed down to the top five for each side, we created data frames of the means for Scores, Upvote Ratio, and Comments. Once we did this, we were able to identify that overall, the left-leaning subreddits had higher Scores and Comment activity, however, the Upvote Ratio was about the same. The similarity of Upvote Ratio makes sense because the subreddits are filled with like-minded people. However, with the Score and Comments being significantly higher for the left-leaning subreddits (average score was 11,064.45 and average comment count of 440.14 while the right-leaning average score was 1382.62 with a comment average of 116.51), we believe this shows a more active left-leaning base on Reddit.

Part 2: Is there an overlap that in to "neutral" subreddits with top authors from the left and right-leaning subreddits?

- Looking at our Venn Diagrams we are looking at the quantity of authors commenting on a "Top" post. We can see that some of the same authors are posting with in different Subreddits, as this will give us a better look if there is any intersectionality between the political subreddits. Left redditors are defined by left leaning subreddits and respectively for right, and neutral.

  We discovered that the left-leaning authors do more posting in the "neutral" subreddits, and within the their respective subreddits. Each diagram gives the total number of authors within the bubbles, we see that the left Redditors have the most authors within their subreddits and are more active across other subreddits.

  The numbers: We know that 78 authors are posting within both the Left-leaning subreddits and the neutral subreddits. 23 authors posting in both the left and right subreddits, and 12 authors that are posting in the both the right and neutral.

  Things to keep in mind: We used the top five left subreddits, the top five right subreddits, and the top four neutral subreddits. We limited our data to the past year, so were limited to under a 1000 post per subreddit.

Part 3: How are the submissions of left-leaning and right-leaning authors performing in "neutral" subreddits?

- In this part we looked to see if there is any overlap in authors from left-leaning subreddits and neutral subreddits as well as right-leaning subreddits and neutral subreddits. We gathered authors and scores from the top sorting as well as controversial subreddits in order to get a holistic picture of authors posting in their respective subreddits.

  What we discovered was pretty interesting. When sorting by top, there were 216 postings that overlapped with left-leaning subreddits and neutral subreddits, whereas on the right-leaning side there were only 29 posts. On the left-leaning side, there were 79 unique posters while only 12 unique authors on the right. In this sense we can see that left-leaning authors are more active in neutral politics since they massively outnumber the right side.

  On top of left leaning-authors posting significantly more than right-leaning posters, the scores associated with left-leaning posts are on average higher as well. When sorting through top the highest score was 189,353 while the highest score on the right leaning side was half of that at 94,714.

  If left-leaning authors are posting more in neutral subreddits than their ideas and opinions are present more often. This can potentially lead to one side's ideologies appearing more, which then brings up the question of whether or not these are actually "neutral" subreddits? If neutral subreddits are being dominated by left-leaning posts then where do right-leaning posts go? If right-leaning posts potentially can't and won't do well in "neutral" subreddits, then this could be the reasoning to extremist right subreddits such as r/the_donald gaining traction. The right-leaning ideas aren't well received in "neutral" subreddits so they need to create their own right-leaning subreddits.

  Even when sorting through controversial there is a pretty significant difference in post activity. When looking at left leaning authors in neutral controversial posts, there were 167 posts compared to 57 posts by right leaning authors. From the data, there is definitely a higher activity level amongst left-leaning posts going through reddit compared to their counterparts.

Part 4: How do the subscriber counts of democratic presidential candidates' subreddits compare to current polling data?

- In this part we compared the subscriber count of each of the top 20 democratic presidential candidates' individual subreddits with current polling data as of 7/19/19 (RealClear Politics). It was very interesting to see the difference. We conclude that Reddit not only leans left, but seems to prefer progressive candidates who are often viewed as far to the left. Joe Biden, the front runner in current polling who is considered closer to the center among democratic candidates, has a very minimal subreddit relative subscribership. Bernie Sanders, a progressive candidate who is widely viewed as a further left-leaning candidate, has a huge subredddit following of over 140,000 in r/SandersForPresident versus only ~1,300 in r/JoeBiden. This can

be largely attributed to Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign, but even r/BernieSanders has over 13,000 subscribers.

The most telling example of Reddit's far left-leaning tendancies is the case of Andrew Yang. Yang is polling at a very minimal 1.57%, however his subreddit is performing in top 2 (depending on which Bernie Sanders subreddit is used) of subreddit subscribership at nearly 12-25% of share. Yang is running on a platform for Universal Basic Income, viewed as a far-left opinion.

Final Conclusion: Reddit is a left-leaning platform with a tendency to lean to the far left. There is more favorable overlapping activity amongst subscribers and authors in left-leaning subreddits and "neutral" subreddits.