



University of Idaho
Library

Exploring the Information Landscape: Expanding your Information World

Jylisa Kenyon
Social Sciences Librarian
University of Idaho Library
jylisadoney@uidaho.edu

What we're covering today

- Using resources that can help us understand our own ideological worldviews and blind spots
- Finding and exploring news sources and authors that hold different ideological worldviews than our own
- Strategies for avoiding snap judgements and chaos climbers

Ideological worldviews

- “An **ideology** is what is believed to be right.”
- “A **worldview** is what is believed to be true.”

Combined, these are “a lens through which self and reality are interpreted, including beliefs about what can be known and done”
(Brown, 2019, p. 33)

What's our ideological worldview?

- Options to discover components of our ideological worldviews include:
 - NYTimes
 - Six Party Quiz:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/09/08/opinion/republicans-democrats-parties.html>
 - AllSides
 - Rate Your Bias: <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/rate-your-bias>

What's our ideological worldview?

- Options to discover components of our ideological worldviews include:
 - Pew Research Center:
 - Political Typology:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/>
 - Religious Typology:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/quiz/religious-typology/>

Activity

Visit <https://www.allsides.com/rate-your-bias>
to discover a bit more about your ideological worldview

Living in our own worldview bubbles

- Our ideological worldviews guide our media and information selections through...
 - **Selective exposure:**
 - “[T]he phenomenon whereby people choose to focus on information in their environment that is congruent with and confirms their current attitudes in order to avoid or reduce cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962)” (Williams et al., 2016, pp. 2-3).

Living in our own worldview bubbles

- Selective exposure can lead to:
 - **Confirmation bias:**
 - “In addition to filtering the information that is attended to, individuals may also actively seek out and assign more weight or validity to information that supports their current attitude” (Williams et al., 2016, p. 3)
 - **Filter bubbles:**
 - When website algorithms remember your past behaviors and attempt to personalize content based on what they think you want to see (Filter Bubble, 2023)

Expanding our information world

- Evaluate the sources / voices we currently listen to
 - [AllSides Media Bias Ratings](#)
 - Wikipedia

Expanding our information world

- Find and follow new sources / creators
 - Consider:
 - Who the folks you read/follow are upvoting or downvoting
 - Social media is great for this!
 - [Yamiche Alcindor](#) (NBC News, Washington Correspondent)
 - Check out blogs and Substacks too!
 - [Noah Smith](#) (Writer)

Expanding our information world

- Expanding our information world isn't always easy and it might make us feel uncomfortable
- Consider your mindset as you approach old and new ideas / perspectives
 - Julia Galef (2021) offers two metaphors that can help us understand the “motivations that can shape our thinking” (Davidson, 2021)

Expanding our information world

- “**Soldier Mindset** is a motivation to defend a preexisting belief or to defend something that you want to believe against any evidence that might threaten to undermine it” (Julia Galef; Davidson, 2021).
- “...**Scout Mindset**...is [a motivation] to go out and see what’s actually there—as clearly and objectively as possible—and to form as accurate a map of a situation or an issue as you can, including any areas of uncertainty. You are always open to revising your map as you learn more and look at the landscape from different perspectives” (Julia Galef; Davidson, 2021).

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for pursuing **open-mindedness**
 - Recognize situations when you might feel compelled to “be right” (Psychology Today, n.d.)
 - Consider whether you are showing “intellectual humility” (Leary et al., 2017; Zmigrod et al., 2019)

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for pursuing **open-mindedness**
 - Try not to jump to conclusions (Psychology Today, n.d.)
 - Consider your mood at that moment
 - Negative mood and information that challenges us (Jonas et al., 2006, p. 13)

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for pursuing **open-mindedness**
 - Conduct a thought experiment (Galef, 2021)
 - Double standard test
 - Selective skeptic test
 - Outsider test
 - Conformity test
 - Status quo bias test
 - Ideological *Turing* test

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for avoiding snap judgements
 - Pursue **open-mindedness**
 - Double standard test
 - “Am I judging other people’s behavior by a standard I wouldn’t apply to myself” or apply to those whose perspectives I agree with (Hersey, 2022)?

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for avoiding snap judgements
 - Pursue **open-mindedness**
 - Conformity test:
 - If you “find [yourself] agreeing with someone else’s viewpoint...[consider what you would do if” this person told [you] they no longer held this view. Would [you] still hold it? Would [you] feel comfortable defending it to them?” (Hersey, 2022)

Expanding our information world

- Strategies for avoiding snap judgements
 - Pursue **open-mindedness**
 - Ideological *Turing* test:
 - Can you explain another “side’s position, belief, or argument that you don’t hold yourself...convincingly enough that someone who doesn’t know your own views can’t tell if you believe the other side or not” (Julia Galef; Davidson, 2021)?

Expanding our information world

- Pursue **open-mindedness...**
but recognize if the source or creator is a “**chaos climber**”

“Chaos isn’t a pit. Chaos is a ladder.”

([Game of Thrones, Littlefinger to Varys, S3E6 “The Climb”](#))

- Chaos climbers are those who seek to “[disrupt] the stability...to create space to move up in the world” (Smith, 2022).

Activity (2)

Work in groups of 2 or 3 and identify
one new creator
that expands a sample person's information world



University of Idaho
Library

Thank you!

Jylisa Kenyon
Social Sciences Librarian
University of Idaho Library
jylisadoney@uidaho.edu

References

AllSides. (n.d.). *How AllSides rates media bias*. <https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-rating-methods>

AllSides. (2019, January 14). *How AllSides rates media bias* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/pKtmL_T9h2s

Brown, J. D. (2019). *Reflective practice of counseling and psychotherapy in a diverse society*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Chandler, D., & Munday, R. (2020). *A dictionary of media and communication*. Oxford University Press.

Davidson, T. (2021, August 18). *Divergent thinking: Understanding the scout mindset with Julia Galef*. State Policy Network. <https://spn.org/articles/an-interview-with-julia-galef/>

Filter bubble. (2023, February 12). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Filter_bubble&oldid=1138945823

Galef, J. (2021). *The scout mindset: Why some people see things clearly and others don't*. Portfolio/Penguin.

HBO. (2021, April 22). *Game of Thrones: Littlefinger tells Varys that chaos is a ladder (Season 3 clip) | HBO* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/HDjNcqQs1yM>

Hersey, J. (2022, February 4). Five lessons from Julia Galef's 'The Scout Mindset'. *Quillette*. <https://quillette.com/2022/02/04/five-lessons-from-julia-galefs-the-scout-mindset/>

References

- Jonas, E., Graupmann, V., & Frey, D. (2006). The influence of mood on the search for supporting versus conflicting information: Dissonance reduction as a means of mood regulation? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(1), 3-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205276118>
- Leary, M. R., Diebels, K. J., Davisson, E. K., Jongman-Sereno, K. P., Isherwood, J. C., Raimi, K. T., Deffler, S. A., & Hoyle, R. H. (2017). Cognitive and interpersonal features of intellectual humility. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(6), 793-813, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217697695>
- Psychology Today Staff. (n.d.). *Motivated reasoning*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/motivated-reasoning>
- Smith, N. (2022, March 21). *Putin's war and the chaos climbers*. Noahpinion. <https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/putins-war-and-the-chaos-climbers?s=r>
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: The Writing Center. *Fallacies*. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/fallacies/>
- Williams, P., Kern M. L., & Waters, L. (2016). Exploring selective exposure and confirmation bias as processes underlying employee work happiness: An intervention study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 878.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00878>
- Zmigrod, L., Zmigrod, S., Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2019). The psychological roots of intellectual humility: The role of intelligence and cognitive flexibility. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 141, 200-208.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.01.016>