

Big Tech's Bubble Effect on Politics

Technology in the United States is poisoning our democratic ideals. In particular, social media creates an isolated “bubble” effect that separates the American people from each other. Mixing Big Tech into our daily consumption of information and news leaves the American people in isolated bubbles of their own beliefs, reinforcing their existing beliefs to be stronger and increasing hyper-partisanship.

Big Tech companies, like Amazon, Google, and FaceBook, create curated recommendations of content for each individual in the United States. Using highly advanced algorithms that examine a user's past history on any given service, and even their entire history on the internet, Big Tech is able to make recommendations to users that Big Tech believes are the most probable to be clicked, viewed, liked, or shared. This curated content is often just showing the other users who have the same views and beliefs, but Big Tech goes so far as to curate the news that individual users will see to match what the algorithm will calculate as the most probable to be interacted with. This creates a major financial incentive for Big Tech to only show it's users what the users are most likely to agree or sympathize with. The happier the user is with the content they see, the more probable it is for them to continue to use a service like Amazon, Google, or FaceBook, which creates more data for Big Tech to collect and sell. This also means Big Tech has the financial incentive to isolate its users from content that they are unlikely to agree or sympathize with.

The financial incentive Big Tech has to shield users from content which those individual users are likely to disagree with, results in a “bubble” effect. “Bubble” isolation constantly reinforces the users pre-existing beliefs, and even convinces users that most people -a majority- of the American people have the same views and beliefs that the individual user does. The

curated content only shows the creators and artists who are the most similar to the individual user, and purposefully eliminates the “other side’s” perspective in discussions. This consistently leads to an “otherization,” or an “us-versus-them” dynamic in our society. When a user is convinced that the majority of the American people agree with them, and are constantly and only exposed to biased information or news that they agree with, often the blame for the problems in the United States falls to “the other side.” The user is even able to spread that message for themselves quickly and easily, with a simple Tweet or FaceBook post that takes seconds.

The direct effect of “otherization” is a rise in hyper-partisanship. The American people are becoming increasingly more divided along party lines. As we are constantly exposed to content that we agree with only, the “otherization” takes hold and we take a firmer stance on our current position. This translates to more extreme positions on both sides of our political system, which is directly reflected in our nation’s elections the last few decades. The American people, in an effort to stop “the other side,” have become more extreme in the ideals that they vote for. We have seen time and again our Congress become increasingly more dysfunctional as hyper-partisanship takes hold as a result of these elections, as every miniscule event or vote becomes the epitome of “us-versus-them” dynamics. Furthermore, political operatives take advantage of this political dysfunction by blaming “the other side” for the dysfunction, to further rile up a base of supporters who already view politics as “us-versus-them,” as a result of their isolated “bubble” created by Big Tech.

Big Tech becoming involved in the way we exchange information and news is devastating to our nation’s democratic ideals. Without any type of legal restraint, no individual person to be held morally responsible for decisions made by Big Tech, and the market and political power of Big Tech corporations owning trillions of dollars, our current system only

encourages their continued undue and immoral actions to influence our politics. Big Tech is toxic to the continued strength -and growth- of our nation's democratic ideals.