## Cross-Partisan Discussions on YouTube: Conservatives Talk to Liberals but Liberals Don't Talk to Conservatives

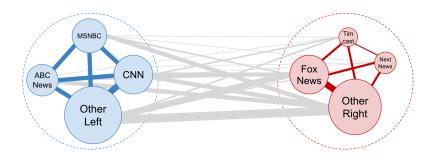
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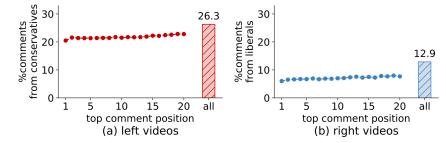
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Siqi Wu, Paul Resnick

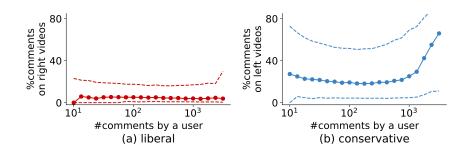
We present the first large-scale measurement study of cross-partisan discussions between liberals and conservatives on YouTube, based on a new dataset of 274,241 political videos from 973 channels of US partisan media and 134M comments from 9.3M users over eight months in 2020.



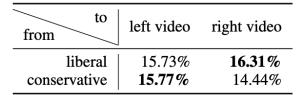
Cross-partisan discussions are common on YouTube: left-leaning and right-leaning channels share many commenters (denoted by grey edges).



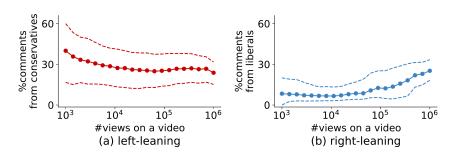
YouTube's comment sorting algorithm makes crosspartisan comments modestly less visible: root comments from conservatives on left-leaning videos and liberals on right-leaning videos are less likely to appear among the top 20 positions.



Cross-partisan commenting is asymmetric: conservatives are much more likely to comment on left-leaning videos than liberals on right-leaning videos.



Conservatives are not significantly more toxic than liberals when users directly comment on the content of videos. Numbers show the percentages of root comments that are toxic (classified by Perspective API).



As a result, right-leaning channels are more like echo chambers. Even there, however, more than one in ten comments is from a liberal user.

from	lib.	cons.	lib.	cons.
	on lef	t video	on righ	nt video
liberal conservative	12.12% 15.24%		13.42% 17.15%	<b>15.31%</b> 10.18%

Cross-partisan replies are more frequently toxic than copartisan replies. The highest toxicity occurs when defending one's home territory. For example, 18.24% of replies are toxic when liberals respond to conservatives on left-leaning videos.