

# Fake News and Bots May Be Worrisome, but Their Political Power Is Overblown | The New York Times

By Brendan Nyhan

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How easy is it to change people's votes in an election?

The answer, a growing number of studies conclude, is that most forms of political persuasion seem to have little effect at all.

This conclusion may sound jarring at a time when people are concerned about the effects of the false news articles that flooded Facebook and other online outlets during the 2016 election.

[...]

None of these findings indicate that fake news and bots aren't worrisome signs for American democracy. They can mislead and polarize citizens, undermine trust in the media, and distort the content of public debate. But those who want to combat online misinformation should take steps based on evidence and data, not hype or speculation.

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