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News Item

How social network sites and other online intermediaries increase exposure to news | PNAS

By Michael Scharkow, Frank Mangold, Sebastian Stier, and Johannes Breuer
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> Research has prominently assumed that social media and web portals that aggregate news restrict the diversity of content that users are exposed to by tailoring news diets toward the users' preferences. In our empirical test of this argument, we apply a random-effects within–between model to two large representative datasets of individual web browsing histories. This approach allows us to better encapsulate the effects of social media and other intermediaries on news exposure. We find strong evidence that intermediaries foster more varied online news diets. The results call into question fears about the vanishing potential for incidental news exposure in digital media environments.
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