

Media Change Deniers: Why Debates Around News Need a Better Evidence Base — And How We Can Get One | Nieman Journalism Lab

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Do you think that most people who get news via social media are caught in filter bubbles? Do you believe that online news use is more fragmented than offline news consumption? That young people will never pay for online news? Or that bots are the main drivers of disinformation online?

If so, your views are based on arguments advanced by media change deniers — pundits who, like [climate change deniers](#), are doubling down on arguments that are directly contradicted by a growing consensus in the best available peer-reviewed scientific research. (Don't get me started on whether print "has a future" or the notion that linear scheduled television is doing just fine.)

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Take the idea that the ranking algorithms that search engines and social media rely on narrow our news diets by feeding us more of what we already believe, leading us into "filter bubbles." This is a plausible and potentially worrying scenario, and we owe Eli Pariser, who [coined the term](#), a great debt for asking an important question. Media researchers have taken it on. And a growing number of independent, evidence-based, peer-reviewed studies have found that, in fact, search engines and social media lead most people to more diverse news — the opposite of the filter bubble hypothesis. (See for example [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).) This is a highly significant and growing scientific consensus! Pundits and others who simply disregard it and double down on the filter bubble idea are, consciously or unconsciously, media change deniers.

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