

Meet the Professor Who's Warning the World About Facebook and Google | The Chronicle of Higher Education

By Sarah Brown

April 23, 2018

Zeynep Tufekci, an associate professor in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, studies technological change. Back in 2012, when many Americans were celebrating President Obama's re-election, she was getting worried.

The Obama campaign had deployed a data-analytics strategy to target voters and get them to the polls in droves. But no one seemed to be talking about the downsides of such methods, Tufekci says: "The way Facebook targeting works, the way social media works, the way other parts of the online ecology work — this is really open to misinformation and misuse."

An [op-ed](#) that November in *The New York Times* helped make her one of the most prominent academic voices on how Facebook and other companies collect data and threaten privacy. Tufekci now writes regularly for the *Times* and has done three TED Talks, written a [book](#), and has nearly 300,000 Twitter followers.

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