

Reinforcing Attitudes in a Gatewatching News Era: Individual-level Antecedents to Sharing Fact-checks on Social Media | Communication Monographs

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Despite the prevalence of fact-checking, little is known about who posts fact-checks online. Based upon a content analysis of Facebook and Twitter digital trace data and a linked online survey ($N = 783$), this study reveals that sharing fact-checks in political conversations on social media is linked to age, ideology, and political behaviors. Moreover, an individual's need for orientation (NFO) is an even stronger predictor of sharing a fact-check than ideological intensity or relevance, alone, and also influences the type of fact-check format (with or without a rating scale) that is shared. Finally, participants generally shared fact-checks to reinforce their existing attitudes. Consequently, concerns over the effects of fact-checking should move beyond a limited-effects approach (e.g., changing attitudes) to also include reinforcing accurate beliefs.

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