

Social Media Gave the Miserable a Voice | The Atlantic

By Charlie Warzel

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Every morning, I wake up and grab my doom machine. My phone is a piece of revolutionary technology that puts the entire world a scroll away, its every pixel an industrial miracle. It's also a cataclysm-delivery device.

I roll over and click the blue "f" logo to watch older friends and relatives grow angry and entrenched in their politics. I click on Twitter and drown in a torrent of terrible news delivered by shouting messengers. On apps like Citizen, push alerts warn me of violence and petty crimes happening right now in my area, while neighborhood narcs and NIMBYs feud and name-call on Nextdoor.

On the doom machine, feeling helpless and hopeless is easier than ever. Our politics, institutions, and reality itself seem fractured. Perhaps the only salve is to fight on the doom machine over who's to blame. Inevitably, this makes us feel worse instead of better. So why do we keep doing it? It seems that many of the extremely online are drawn to the doom, and that should make us concerned about the health and future of our public digital spaces.

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