

The Algorithmic Rise of the “Alt-Right” | Contexts Magazine

By Jessie Daniels

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There are two strands of conventional wisdom unfolding in popular accounts of the rise of the alt-right. One says that what’s really happening can be attributed to a crisis in White identity: the alt-right is simply a manifestation of the angry White male who has status anxiety about his declining social power. Others contend that the alt-right is an unfortunate eddy in the vast ocean of Internet culture. Related to this is the idea that polarization, exacerbated by filter bubbles, has facilitated the spread of Internet memes and fake news promulgated by the alt-right. While the first explanation tends to ignore the influence of the Internet, the second dismisses the importance of White nationalism. I contend that we have to understand both at the same time.

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