Characterizing Information Diets of Social Media Users

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Media studies

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Media studies is a discipline and field of study that deals with the content, history and effects of various media; in particular, the mass media. Media studies may draw on traditions from both the social sciences and the humanities, but mostly from its core disciplines of mass communication, communication, communication sciences and communication studies. Researchers may also develop and employ theories and
What information is being produced?

What are people consuming?

Is the coverage biased?

How are these media orgs influencing them?

Media studies
What information is being produced?

What are people consuming?

Is the coverage biased?

How are these channels influencing them?

Media studies
Nearly half of the US internet users rely on Facebook to get political news rather than the local television.

Pew Research Center
Few producers

Millions of users are producers & consumers
Few producers

Team of editors

Millions of users are producers & consumers

Users post what they like
Few producers

Team of editors

Broadcast channels:
Everyone receives the same information

Millions of users are producers & consumers

Users post what they like

Personalized channels of information
Few producers

Team of editors

Broadcast channels:
Everyone receives the same information

Millions of users are producers & consumers

Users post what they like

Personalized channels of information

Personalized recommendations
Information Diet

Composition of information produced or consumed
Information Diet

**Composition** of information produced or consumed

- Topical
Information Diet

Composition of information produced or consumed

- Topical
- Perspectives / Opinions
Information Diet

Composition of information produced or consumed

- Topical
- Perspectives / Opinions
- Source Diversity
Information Diet

*Composition* of information produced or consumed

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Inferring Information Diets

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Inferring Information Diets

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Inferring Information Diets

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What’s in the paper?

Production

Consumption

Recommendations
Production - Main Questions

• Do news organizations like NYTimes produce the same diet on social media as they do on broadcast mass media?

• There is an unbundling of information on social media.

• News orgs produce very specialized information on a few topics.

• What do the popular users on social produce? Are they specialists or generalists?

• Popular social media users produce very specialized diets, focusing on one or two topics.
Production : News orgs
Production: News orgs
Production : News orgs
Production : News orgs
Production: News orgs

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Production: News orgs

NYTSports - 67%
ytimesbooks - 60%

Multiple topic specific Twitter accounts
Production: News orgs

Unbundling of information

Multiple topic specific Twitter accounts

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Production - Main Questions

• Do news organizations like NYTimes produce the same diet on social media as they do on broadcast mass media?

• What do the popular users on social media produce? Are they specialists or generalists?
Diets of Popular Twitter users

Anderson Cooper

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Diets of Popular Twitter users

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@Carter_Roberts: Carter Roberts
president & ceo, @World_Wildlife (WWF); dad, husband, climber, birder, scuba diver, golfer; bushwhacking better than following a trail.
Production - Takeaways

• Do news organizations like NYTimes produce the same diet on social media as they do on broadcast mass media?
  • Multiple accounts on Twitter - Unbundling of information
  • Very specialized production by each account

• What do the popular users on social media produce? Are they specialists or generalists?
  • Focus on one or two topics - specialized production
What’s in the paper?

Production
Consumption
Recommendations
Consumption

• Do the social media users stitch together a balanced diet for themselves?

• Personalized diets chosen by users are highly focused on one or two topics

• E.g. For more than 50% of users, just one topic contributes more than 50% of their diet.

Recommendations

• Do recommendations trap you in filter bubbles or do they add diversity?

• Do the recommended diets help to balance the consumed diets of social media users?
Consumption

• Do the social media users stitch together a balanced diet for themselves?

Recommendations

• Do recommendations trap you in filter bubbles or do they add diversity?
Consumption

• Do the social media users stitch together a balanced diet for themselves?

Recommendations

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Consumption

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Recommendations

• Do recommendations trap you in filter bubbles or do they add diversity?

• Do the recommended diets help to balance the consumed diets of social media users?

Results on the poster!
Information Diet produced by danielequercia

Information Diet produced by cecim

Information Diet produced by winteram

Information Diet produced by clauwa

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Thanks!

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twitter-app.mpi-sws.org/information-diets/