



Voter Profiling in the Social Media Age

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Political strategists have always used data-driven insights to strengthen campaigns, but social media has created datasets of unprecedented size that are being used to hyper-target individuals. How can we tap into internet technologies in order to protect the privacy of voters and reduce political echo chambers?

Challenges

Information is being pushed to us with more and more sophistication, but there are few tools available for citizens to understand how and which of their data is being used to classify them into outreach groups. Theoretically, it is possible to completely opt out of social media platforms and remove personal profiles from targeting databases, but these sites are also valuable tools to stay in touch with friends and family.

Simultaneously, advanced targeting techniques are keeping voters in echo chambers, where they are only presented with messages they are likely to engage with and kept from uncomfortable or unfamiliar viewpoints. Conversations with those who hold opposing views are made difficult by the realization that each person is consuming an entirely different information diet, with little insight into the consumption of the other.

Our Solution

Code for Democracy deconstructs political messages in order to understand which types of citizens are being targeted by each information campaign. Breaking down the attributes that campaigns are using to segment the audience of their messages allows citizens to be more selective about the information they share online as well as see how messages are tailored for those outside of their echo chambers.

Further Reading

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