

Filter Bubbles & Echo Chambers

Communications & Media

A popular claim about isolation that the evidence only partly supports.

The popular claim

- Ranking hides opposing views
- Users see only what they agree with
- Isolation drives polarisation
- The algorithm is the main cause
- Effect assumed to be large

What research finds

- Online diets are often more diverse
- Heavy partisans self-select strongly
- Small minorities live in real bubbles
- Exposure to opposition can harden views
- Offline networks are often narrower

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Evidence is mixed and contested. Self-selection appears to matter at least as much as ranking.

Educational reference. Findings vary by platform, country and method, and much of the field relies on data platforms control.